



Hobbes's Critique of Religion
and Related Writings

LEO STRAUSS

Translated and edited by Gabriel Bartlett and Svetozar Minkov

"All too often, Hobbes's engagement with Scripture, revelation, and the possibility of miracles has been shunted to one side by readers focused on that great man's political science and psychology. This scrupulously edited translation calls for a change of focus and enables it with abundant aid. Thanks to the exemplary rigor, clarity, and fearlessness of Strauss's analysis, the neglected second half of *Leviathan* lies open for reconsideration. Many riches await those coming to it with freshly opened eyes."

RALPH LERNER, *University of Chicago*

"This book sheds provocative light on Strauss's analysis of the Hobbesian and Cartesian roots of modern rationalism in its response to the challenge of revealed religion."

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"An indispensable resource for both students of early modern thought and for those interested in the thought of Leo Strauss. Strauss's early essays on Hobbes address with remarkable force and directness key concerns of such well-known later works as *Natural Right and History* and *What Is Political Philosophy?* Strauss's comparison of Hobbes and Descartes alone is well worth the price of admission. His analysis of parts 3 and 4 of Hobbes's *Leviathan* is both painstaking in its detail and sweeping in its conclusions. Strauss's early essays are a remarkable philosophic contribution in their own right and a significant aid to an understanding of Hobbes."

SUSAN MELD SHELL, *Boston College*

"This is a very impressive volume. *Hobbes's Critique of Religion and Related Writings* will be a most welcome addition to the publications by and on Strauss."

RICHARD L. VELKLEY, *Tulane University*

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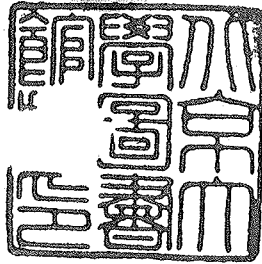
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Leo Strauss (1899–1973) was the Robert Maynard Hutchins Distinguished Service Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago. He is the author of *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, *Natural Right and History*, *What Is Political Philosophy?* and other volumes published by the University of Chicago Press.

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Translators' Preface



THE MAIN CONTRIBUTION OF THE VOLUME

The reader will find here, translated into English for the first time, a number of Leo Strauss's early writings on Thomas Hobbes, published first in the German original in the third volume of Strauss's collected works (*Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3: *Hobbes' politische Wissenschaft und zugehörige Schriften—Briefe*, edited by Heinrich Meier and Wiebke Meier). Of these writings, the most important is a book-length manuscript entitled *Hobbes's Critique of Religion: A Contribution to Understanding the Enlightenment*. Strauss's published book on Hobbes—*The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*—is his most widely acclaimed work among scholars here and abroad. For example, even a serious critic of Strauss, Gregory Vlastos, remarked that the work "ranks with the finest work on Hobbes produced in my lifetime . . . solid from beginning to end, daring and provocative."¹ The main text translated here was written over the course of the year 1933–34, shortly before Strauss wrote *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*. The two works are of a piece because, as Strauss's preface to the German edition of *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes* reveals, Strauss considered it to be part of his investigations into what he termed "the theologico-political problem." In fact, one might suggest that Strauss's work on Hobbes's critique of religion is the basis of his work on Hobbes's political

1. "Further Lessons of Leo Strauss: An Exchange," *New York Review of Books*, April 24, 1986, 51.

philosophy. Strauss argues that parts 3 and 4 of *Leviathan* offer a reinterpretation of the Bible, so as to make it consonant with Hobbes's philosophical and political claims in parts 1 and 2. This allows Strauss, in turn, to show paradoxically that this reinterpretation provides the foundation for these claims. Together with reviving a number of philosophical arguments now forgotten or taken for granted, as well as revealing many new opportunities for scholarly research, the publication of this translation should encourage a more widespread teaching of the second half of *Leviathan*, a portion of *Leviathan* almost always neglected even at the best college and graduate programs in the country. We believe this neglect is in great part due to the difficulty of the text. Strauss's study will be of enormous help in elucidating that part of *Leviathan*. What Strauss's other book on Hobbes did for the rest of Hobbes's thought, this "new" book by Strauss should do for Hobbes's explication of the Bible and consequently for Hobbes's religious teaching as a whole. An added bonus of this text is a section in which Strauss makes a substantive comparison of Hobbes with Descartes. There is little elsewhere written by Strauss, one of the great political philosophers of the twentieth century, on Descartes, one of the greatest philosophers simply.

SUBSTANTIVE ARGUMENTS IN *HOBBS'S CRITIQUE OF RELIGION*

Strauss presents in *Hobbes's Critique of Religion* the refutation of miracles as a central and fundamental concern of Hobbes. He does not do so, at least not clearly or explicitly, anywhere else.

Yet one could point to *Natural Right and History* where Strauss speaks of Hobbes's "skepticism engendered by materialism":² might this skepticism not be traced to the difficulty posed by the apparent possibility of miracles? One could object to the legitimacy of such a connection by mentioning the cases of Calvin, who believed in miracles but seems not to have been a skeptic, and Hume, who was a skeptic but appears not to have believed in miracles. But apart from the fact that skepticism and openness to the possibility of miracles may nevertheless have been closely related in Hobbes's particular case, one can still argue that if indeed Hume scoffed at miracles in his heart, then it is unlikely that he could have accepted or understood fully his doubts about the knowability of the world. And if Calvin did not think of himself

2. *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 172.

as a skeptic, this seems to be possible only if he did not mean by skepticism the inability of natural reason alone to know the world.

Getting closer to the specific case of Hobbes, it is relevant to refer to a section in *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes* where Strauss speaks of Hobbes as breaking with natural theology.³ This passage shows that even in his published book on Hobbes, Strauss suggests that in *Leviathan* Hobbes thinks of God not only or even primarily as a God of nature and necessity but as a God of revelation and miracles. In *Hobbes's Critique of Religion*, this tendency is perhaps represented best in notes 66–68 and in the latter half of the section to which these notes belong.

A related objection to the possibility of Hobbes's having taken seriously the problem of miracles is that he would have had a ready rational or Spinozist solution to it: a refutation of the existence of a miracle-working God. Such a refutation would consist in pointing out that one cannot claim both that God is an intelligible first cause and that, at the same time, He can perform miracles. The latter aspect of God would suggest a freedom or an arbitrariness that is presumably incompatible with the divine comprehensibility implied in the proof that He is the first cause. But if by 1641 Hobbes had already broken with natural theology, this would seem to mean that he could not have relied on this kind of reasoning (e.g., "God as a first cause precludes miracles") as a refutation of the possibility of miracles.

More generally, there is evidence that even in later years, Strauss advanced the thesis that founders of modernity, and Hobbes in particular, were deeply motivated by a desire to respond to the challenge of the possibility of miracles. For example, in his review essay "On a New Interpretation of Plato's Political Philosophy," Strauss states: "a case can be made for the view that it was reflection guided by the Biblical notion of creation which ultimately led to the doctrine that the world as created by God, or the 'thing-in-itself,' is inaccessible to human knowledge, or the idealistic assertion that the world as far as we can understand it, that is, the world as studied by human science, must be the 'work' of the human mind."⁴ The note to this statement lists passages

3. *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Its Genesis*, trans. Elsa M. Sinclair (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 77–79.

4. *Social Research* 13, no. 1 (1946): 338–39; cf. also *The City and Man* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1964), 42–44. In the spring of 1941, Strauss taught a course at the New School, "Political Philosophy in the Age of Reason," in which he gave a similar account of Hobbes's fundamental concern: "Descartes does not assert that we live in a materialistic universe; he finally arrives at the result that the universe is ruled by a most intelligent God; that is to say: starting from the hypothesis that the world is a world of chance, he discovers a new basis of

science as the absolutely certain basis, and on that basis the original *hypothesis* itself becomes doubtful. From here, one can understand Hobbes: he *does* assert that we live in a mechanistic universe; as a consequence, he is confronted with the prima facie impossibility of science in such a universe; he therefore withdraws himself from the universe, from the things, to the ideas by assuming that the world is annihilated; after having made that retreat, after having built up on the basis of ideas \neq things an absolutely certain science, his original *assertion* can no longer be maintained. The premise common to Descartes and Hobbes is: in a universe not ruled by intelligence, by understanding, human understanding of the universe is impossible or at least problematic. Or, to put it the other way round: a universe, not ruled by intelligence, is not intelligible. A universe ruled by *chance* will be such an unintelligible universe. But there is another possibility no less terrifying for the philosopher: a universe ruled by an arbitrarily acting God; the phenomena of such a universe will be all of them miracles and consequently inaccessible to human insight. Desc. [Descartes] alludes to that terrifying possibility by speaking of the deceiving God. . . . In order to understand the historical bearing of this argument, we must remind ourselves of this fact: the scholastics had reconciled the teaching of the Bible with the teaching of science by accepting the distinction between miracles and nature: miracles are supernatural phenomena. The distinction implies that God does not ordinarily interfere with nature, as created by Him. This view was not acceptable to such fervently religious men as Calvin (see my *Spinoza's Critique of Religion* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997], 196–98). Calvin abolishes the distinction between nature and miracles: everything is miraculous. It is with this possibility in mind that Desc. and Hobbes undertake the reconstruction of science: the basis of science must be *so* firm and certain it cannot be shattered even by this extreme possibility. Let us accept the possibility that the world created by an incomprehensible God, the real world is utterly miraculous and therefore utterly incomprehensible; even in that case we need not be despondent. We shall be able to erect a *new* science, a science of a new type by withdrawing from the universe to a sphere over which even almighty God has not power = the sphere of our ideas. . . . [The] *[r]eason of H.'s "idealism,"* of his withdrawal from the universe to the *ideas* of the universe. Which *character* of the universe is responsible for this procedure? . . . The universe is created by God, and God's nature is incomprehensible—therewith also his operations—and consequently, the universe is incomprehensible. *Everything* is miraculous, and therefore incomprehensible to man." One should add, at the same time, that in his notes for the same course, Strauss writes: "Now, there cannot be the slightest doubt that H. did *not* believe in miracles. Indeed, 'it requires charity not to call him an atheist.' Therefore, the real reason of his 'idealism' cannot be religious in any way. The incomprehensibility of the universe must have a reason other than its having been created by an incomprehensible God. To discover that reason, we must turn to *Descartes*. For Descartes has shown to Hobbes the necessity for turning from the universe to the ideas. H. accepts the first Meditation as *true*." And in his treatment of Descartes, Strauss writes, "Against Krüger [see n. 249 in *Hobbes's Critique of Religion* below]: K. asserts that the reaction to the Biblical tradition is the only reason of Desc.'s new foundation. But: the doubt of mathematical certainty is required *equally* by the Deus deceptor [deceiving God] *and* by the fortuna-casus-possibility [the possibility of fortune-chance]. What have these 2 possibilities in common? They both are opposed to Plato-Aristotle; the Aristotelian answer has become problematic; but his and Plato's fundamental insight: only the intelligible can be understood, is recognized. Therefore, Desc. must try to make the foundation of intelligibility independent of the νοῦς ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ [mind in the cosmos]." Leo Strauss Papers, box 6, folder 8, Department of Special Collections, University of Chicago Library; see pp. 85–114 below.

from Hobbes's *De cive*, *De homine*, and *Leviathan*. In one of the *Leviathan* passages (chap. 31, section 33—also referred to in *Hobbes's Critique of Religion* [p. 33 below]), Hobbes says that "in the attributes which we give to God, we are not to consider the signification of philosophical truth, but the signification of pious intention." This appears to be a clear rejection of natural theology as a way of dealing with the problem of miracles or the problem of the intelligibility of the world. In fact, Strauss claims that Hobbes was agnostic about both theology and nature as an intelligible order (n. 223 in *Hobbes's Critique of Religion*, citing *Leviathan*, chap. 37, with the italicized sentences). "Hobbes makes questionable, *at the same time*, revealed religion and natural reason" (p. 91 below).

Now if it is true that Strauss did indeed take seriously the thesis that the core of modernity, and of Hobbes's thought, consists in an effort to solve difficulties posed by the possibility of miracles, it becomes all the more puzzling why Strauss did not publish the text, *Hobbes's Critique of Religion*, that makes this motivation and concern most explicit. Could it be that the manuscript cut too close to the heart of the matter, if without full argumentation and documentation? (Several other considerations in this regard are discussed in Heinrich Meier's introduction to the third volume of Strauss's collected works—included as an introduction to this volume.)

What does seem clear is that the above-discussed thesis makes intelligible many features of *Hobbes's Critique of Religion*. In fact, the work can be understood as Strauss's recounting of Hobbes's various attempts to meet the challenge posed by the possibility of miracles—Hobbes's various efforts to ground science against the dangers of an incomprehensible God. These attempts include (1) entertaining the possibility that theological politics could be ignored, or rather scoffed into desuetude, as an admittedly unconquered fortress (p. 29 below)—this possibility becomes somewhat more tenable when one adds the fourth argument or series of arguments below; (2) refuting Christianity's own claims about itself through a historical account of Christianity: "Roman imperialism, as it were, after failing in its attempt to conquer the world with weapons, with the means of the real world, repeated its attempt to establish a universal monarchy with fantastic means, with the help of figments of the power of the imagination" (p. 62 below);⁵ (3) withdrawing into Cartesian rationalism, that is, into consciousness, as in the thought experiment of annihilating the world in one's imagination and trying to establish what is left despite this annihilation (e.g., pp. 91–92 below);

5. Cf. *What Is Political Philosophy? And Other Studies* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1959), 188–89.

(4) combining art (technology) and wily common sense (see the final pages of *Hobbes's Critique of Religion*) so as to create an island of sobriety and practical intelligibility within an otherwise unintelligible universe; this approach is also related to an argument based on the "consciousness of progress" (p. 94).

Strauss's recognition of the gravity of the problem of miracles, a recognition that makes intelligible the efforts outlined in these four points, is compatible with the acknowledgment that the direct textual evidence for such a recognition in Hobbes himself is not as clear as one might wish it to be. Part of Strauss's argument in *Hobbes's Critique of Religion* may be characterized as a speculative reconstruction, but a reconstruction based on the view that it is a "disgrace" for "anyone who claims ever to have come within hailing distance of philosophy or science" not to be concerned with proving the impossibility of revelation.⁶

THE SHORTER WRITINGS

In "Some Remarks on the Political Science of Hobbes," an extended book review, Strauss strives to identify the fundamental stratum of Hobbes's thought through the prism of the vanity-fear distinction. Strauss offers a penetrating account of desire and obligation that culminates in relating Hobbes's deepest thought to the distinction between politics and philosophy as that distinction has been modified by Christianity. This sharp piece presents in a nutshell the thesis of *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*: that the basis of Hobbes's teaching is not a new natural science but a reflection about morality.

"Foreword to a Planned Book on Hobbes (Hobbes on Natural Right)" represents a fuller engagement with the thought of two German legal positivists, Hans Kelsen and Carl Bergbohm, the relativistic implications of whose denial of natural right English-speaking readers of Strauss may be slightly familiar with from the introduction and first chapter of *Natural Right and History*.⁷

"The Political Science of Hobbes: An Introduction to Natural Right" is a shorthand sketch of an unrealized book on Hobbes. While somewhat cryptic on account of its stenographic character, it is attractive in the breadth of its projected scope, as well as, for example, in its suggestive connections to Plato and Martin Heidegger. (We have arranged these three shorter writ-

6. "Reason and Revelation," in Heinrich Meier, *Leo Strauss and the Theologico-Political Problem*, trans. Marcus Brainard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 175.

7. *Natural Right and History*, 4 n. 2 and 10 n. 3, respectively.

ings—and in fact, all four writings, including *Hobbes's Critique of Religion*—in order of their length, beginning with the longest.)

Strauss's letter to Hans-Georg Gadamer* and Gerhard Krüger* represents Strauss's own account of *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, written shortly after Strauss had completed the manuscript.

THE CHARACTER OF THE TRANSLATION

We have attempted to translate Strauss's German as literally as possible while at the same time rendering it into readable English. The difficulty of combining literalness with readability is one reason why those who wish to study these texts in the closest possible way would have to turn to the originals. We have been compelled in some instances to translate the same German word with different English ones or use the same English word for different German ones. Where we could, we have sought to determine, by examining all of Strauss's English writings, what his own preferred translation for a German word might have been (e.g., "exposedness" for *Preisgegebenheit*). We have occasionally had recourse to existing translations of Strauss's writings by Elsa Sinclair and by Eve Adler for the purpose of checking words. All translations from languages other than German (i.e., Greek, Latin, and French) are also our own, unless otherwise noted. Insertions in square brackets within quotations are Strauss's. Notes marked by symbols and signed "EDS." are Heinrich and Wiebke Meier's; those signed "TRANS." are the translators'.

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* Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002), a student of Heidegger, was a major twentieth-century thinker in his own right—TRANS.

* Gerhard Krüger (1902–72), also a student of Heidegger, wrote on Plato and Kant—TRANS.

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INTRODUCTION

The History of Strauss's Hobbes Studies in the 1930s

Heinrich Meier



Part 1 [of the third volume of Leo Strauss's *Gesammelte Schriften* (Collected Writings)] contains the book *Hobbes' politische Wissenschaft in ihrer Genesis* written in London and Cambridge in 1934–35 in German and published in 1936 in English as *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Its Genesis*, which established Strauss's early reputation in the Anglo-Saxon world. The German original, which appeared in 1965, three decades after its writing, with the title *Hobbes' politische Wissenschaft* (Hobbes's Political Science), is presented here in a thoroughly revised edition, according to the typescript and the sources, into which the additions and supplements of the English version have been incorporated. To this are added, along with "Notes on Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*," with the marginalia from Strauss's personal copy, four unpublished texts: "Outline: *The Political Science of Hobbes: An Introduction to Natural Right*" and "Foreword to a Planned Book on Hobbes," both written in Berlin in 1931, the essay "Some Notes on the Political Science of Hobbes," which was written in Paris in 1932–33, as well as the unfinished monograph of more than one hundred pages in print, *Hobbes's Critique of Religion: A Contribution to Understanding the Enlightenment*, which Strauss began in Paris in 1933 and worked on further in London in 1934.

The writings put together in volumes 1–3 of the *Gesammelte Schriften* attest to a penetrating, occasionally interrupted, but never abandoned confrontation with the philosophy of Thomas Hobbes, stretching over a decade,

from the mid-twenties to 1936. "My study of Hobbes began," Strauss writes in 1964, "in the context of an investigation of the beginnings of biblical criticism in the seventeenth century, namely, of Spinoza's *Theologico-Political Treatise*."¹ The first fruit of this confrontation was the Hobbes chapter in the monograph *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, which was finished in 1928 and published in 1930, a chapter that was to play a key role in Carl Schmitt's *Leviathan* book of 1938.² On January 8, 1930, Strauss reports to Gerhard Krüger that he would "now like to continue the investigation begun" in the Spinoza book "in the form of an analysis of Hobbesian anthropology," and on October 3 of the following year he mentions to the same correspondent that "Hobbes" needs yet another year of intensive work.³ The Hobbes project had in the meantime taken on such concrete forms that by the end of October and the beginning of November of 1931 Strauss was able to set down a detailed outline of a book with the title *The Political Science of Hobbes: An Introduction to Natural Right*. A few days later, on November 16, he reports to Krüger: "In addition, I am writing a foreword (not meant for print) in which I try to argue for the desideratum of natural right and, for its sake, a critical history of natural right. What concerns me here above all is to emphasize that the sole presupposition of the present-day skepticism about natural right is the historical consciousness."⁴ At the end of 1931, in "Foreword to a Planned Book on Hobbes," using Hans Kelsen and Karl Bergbohm as examples, Strauss subjects the arguments of positivism and historicism against natural right to a penetrating critique, which still occupies him a year later in Paris when he agrees to write an "overview of the literature on natural right"

1. The following is an excerpt from Heinrich Meier's foreword to *Leo Strauss: Gesammelte Schriften* (GS), 2nd ed., vol. 3 (Stuttgart-Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 2008; 1st ed., 2001). GS, 3:7.

2. *Die Religionskritik Spinozas als Grundlage seiner Bibelwissenschaft. Untersuchungen zu Spinozas Theologisch-politischem Traktat* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1930), introduction §4 Hobbes, pp. 61–83 [*Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, trans. Elsa M. Sinclair (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 86–104]; GS, 1:126–48. On the significance of the Hobbes chapter for Carl Schmitt's *Der Leviathan in der Staatslehre des Thomas Hobbes. Sinn und Fehlschlag eines politischen Symbols* (Hamburg, 1938) [*The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes: Meaning and Failure of a Political Symbol*, trans. George Schwab and Erna Hilfstein (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008)], see my book *Die Lehre Carl Schmitts. Vier Kapitel zur Unterscheidung Politischer Theologie und Politischer Philosophie* (Stuttgart-Weimar, 1994), 169–86 [*The Lesson of Carl Schmitt: Four Chapters on the Distinction between Political Theology and Political Philosophy*, trans. Marcus Brainard (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 109–21].

3. GS, 3:382 and 392.

4. GS, 3:396; see also p. 394.

for the journal *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*.⁵ Because of the political upheaval in Germany, nothing more came of the overview of natural right,⁶ whereas the “planned book on Hobbes” had come so far that it could serve Carl Schmitt at the beginning of 1932 already as the basis for a letter of recommendation that helped Strauss to get an urgently needed Rockefeller Foundation scholarship.⁷ By then, according to a later report of Strauss’s, it had grown to one hundred pages,⁸ and a manuscript of this length—for the most part typewritten—is to be found among Strauss’s unpublished papers in Chicago. The comparison with the “Outline” of 1931 shows that the manuscript of the first independent work on Hobbes, however, did not progress beyond more than a fragment consisting of at most a third of the planned book.⁹ The manuscript breaks off with the sentence: “Hobbes does not begin with the question concerning order or law, because

5. Letter to Karl Löwith, November 15, 1932, *GS*, 3:608.

6. Consider the critique Strauss levels at Kelsen and Bergbohm twenty years later in *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 4 n. 2 and 10 n. 3. The comment on Bergbohm likewise concerns—without his being mentioned by name—the issue of Carl Schmitt.

7. See, in this connection, *Carl Schmitt, Leo Strauss und “Der Begriff des Politischen.” Zu einem Dialog unter Abwesenden* (Stuttgart, 1988), 17, 131, and 134f. [*Carl Schmitt and Leo Strauss: The Hidden Dialogue*, trans. J. Harvey Lomax (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 9, 123, and 127f.] as well as the editor’s preface in *GS*, 2:xxxi n. 44.

8. On December 7, 1933, Strauss writes in a letter to Gershom Scholem: “That my Hobbes book is not yet finished has to do—other than with external difficulties—with the fact that this philosopher is simply much, much deeper than one usually assumes. And I do not want to force anything with such an important matter. A hundred-page exposé was already finished two years ago: a letter of recommendation from Carl Schmitt . . . has earned me the Rockefeller Scholarship” (*GS*, 3:708–9). On November 13, 1932, Gerhard Krüger mentions his readings of the Hobbes manuscripts that Strauss had sent him (*GS*, 3:401).

9. The manuscript comprises the following, fully worked out, chapters and subchapters: “Introduction. First Chapter. Subject and Method of Political Science. §1 The Concept of Political Science. (a) Naturalistic and Anthropological Politics. (b) The Authoritative Concept of Political Science. (c) The Integral Political Science as Fundamental Science. (d) The Method of Political Science. §2 The Tradition of Political Science. §3 The Approach of Political Science. Second Chapter. The Two Postulates of Human Nature. §4 The Nature of Man. (a) The Leading Thought. (b) Comparative Interpretations of De cive 1.3–6 with the Parallels in the Elements (1.14.2–5) and in the Leviathan (13). (c) The Concealment of the Leading Thought. (d) Naturalistic and Anthropological Teaching on Human Nature. (e) The Teaching on Human Nature as Teaching on Affections. §5 The Return to the State of Nature. §6 The Justification of Natural Right. (a) Formal Identification.” Leo Strauss Papers, box 10, folder 5 [currently box 15, folder 2], Department of Special Collections, University of Chicago Library. Compare, in this connection, the 5 planned chapters and 17 §§ of “Outline: *The Political Science of Hobbes*” [pp. 151–58, in this volume].

he denies the existence of an order or a law that preceded human will.”¹⁰ The publication of the manuscript, which would have caused the present volume to swell to a further 150 pages, was dispensed with for two reasons above all. First, there would have been considerable overlapping and repetition, since in the Hobbes writings of the years 1933–36 Strauss takes up again and deepens subjects with which he deals extensively in the manuscript of 1931–32, such as the anthropological antagonism between vanity and fear. Second, in light of his research and studies in Paris and London, it appeared to Strauss as early as 1934 that his “exposé” was in need of thorough revision,¹¹ a revision that he completed in the later works on Hobbes, without going back to the earlier text.

The first publication on Hobbes from the Paris period was occasioned by a new release by Zbigniew Lubiński. In November of 1932, Strauss contemplated reviewing Lubiński’s book *Die Grundlagen des ethisch-politischen Systems von Hobbes* [The Foundations of the Ethical-Political System of Hobbes] for Paul Hinneberg’s *Deutsche Literaturzeitung* in Berlin and/or for a French journal.¹² After political events had eliminated the possibility of publication in Berlin, Strauss published the essay, “Einige Anmerkungen über die politische Wissenschaft des Hobbes” [Some Notes on the Political Science of Hobbes], only in French in the yearbook edited by Alexandre Koyré, *Recherches Philosophiques*. The translation into French, as emerges

10. Strauss underlined this sentence, which is inserted at the end of a handwritten extension beginning with “§6 The Justification of Natural Right. (a) Formal Identification.” The typewritten section (to which handwritten extensions of several pages are repeatedly adjoined) and thus most probably also the “exposé,” which would have been given to Schmitt for appraisal, concludes with this paragraph: “The traditional view that man is by nature a social animal, i.e., that the state can be founded on the natural sociality of man, is rejected by Hobbes as resting on too *frivolous* a consideration of human nature. The traditional view takes the *appearance* of sociability in ‘purposeless’ being together as *genuine* sociability. This appearance must be set aside, the appearance of sociability must be exploded so that the state of nature can be exposed as its ground and its truth, on which and against which the state can be founded. The interpretation cannot content itself with the fact that the development of the state begins in the state of nature; it must, thinking of the ‘analytical’ character of political science, set forth how Hobbes *arrives at* the state of nature; he arrives at it by *exiting* from actual living together in *orientation* to that phenomenon of actual living together in which the nature of man shows itself in relative purity according to free sociability, in *disregarding* the actual state that already enables this phenomenon and at the same time conceals the dangerousness of human nature.” MS of 1931–32, p. 94.

11. To Jacob Klein, on October 10, 1934, Strauss mentions the old project of a “presentation and critique of the political science [of Hobbes], which I began 3–4 years ago and which will naturally be overhauled entirely” (GS, 3:523).

12. See the letter from Klein of December 1, 1932, GS, 3:457.

from the typescript of the German original, was undertaken by Alexandre Kojevnikoff/Kojève.¹³ In July 1933, Strauss sends friends and acquaintances the first offprints of the essay, "Quelques remarques sur la science politique de Hobbes," which he characterizes as "a kind of 'announcement' of my study" of the political science of Hobbes.¹⁴

Instead of returning to the long-intended investigation that "Some Notes on the Political Science of Hobbes" was supposed to announce, Strauss was kept busy with new research projects, which intensified so much toward the end of his stay in Paris that at the turn of the year 1933–34 he was able to designate two Hobbes studies as his task for the foreseeable future: the confrontation with the critique of religion, which he had envisaged in the summer of 1933 as a French diploma thesis with the title *La critique religieuse de Hobbes*, an endeavor he gave up in December, since, at the time of his departure for England, the work was "nowhere near finished," and in addition a comparative analysis of Hobbes and Hegel.¹⁵ Both projects were further pursued by Strauss in London and Cambridge in 1934–36 but were not or were only in part realized: *Hobbes's Critique of Religion* was "close to two-thirds finished" in October of 1934, and in May of 1935 Strauss speaks of it as "a further study," to which the first Hobbes book, just completed, "should serve as a bridge." As for the Hobbes-Hegel study, Strauss informs the public in 1936 in a short footnote in his Hobbes book, which he adds to a pointed paragraph on Hobbes's political philosophy as the basis of Hegel's philosophy of self-consciousness: "M. Alexandre Kojèvnikoff and the writer intend to undertake a detailed investigation of the connexion between Hegel and Hobbes."¹⁶ The more exact elucidation of the connection between Hegel

13. See "Editorische Hinweise," *GS*, 3:779, and the letter to Klein of July 19, 1933, *GS*, 3:468. Cf. Strauss's letter to Kojève of December 17, 1932, published in English translation in Leo Strauss, *On Tyranny: Revised and Expanded Edition, Including the Strauss-Kojève Correspondence*, ed. Victor Gourevitch and Michael S. Roth (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 222.

14. Letter of July 17, 1933, to Krüger, *GS*, 3:431; cf. Klein's letter of the same day to Strauss, p. 467. The papers of Carl Schmitt contain an offprint of "Quelques remarques" with a dedication by Strauss. It is possible that Strauss had enclosed the reprint to his letter of July 10, 1933, to Schmitt. See *Carl Schmitt, Leo Strauss und "Der Begriff des Politischen,"* 134–35 [*Carl Schmitt, Leo Strauss, and the Concept of the Political,* 127–28].

15. Letters of July 17 and December 3, 1933, to Krüger, *GS*, 3:431 and 435, of December 31, 1933, to Klein, p. 485, of December 6, 1933, from Löwith, p. 640, and of December 7, 1933, to Scholem, p. 708.

16. Letters to Klein of October 10, 1934, *GS*, 3:523, and to Krüger of May 12, 1935, p. 446; *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Its Genesis*, trans. Elsa M. Sinclair (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), 58 n. 1; new edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952),

and Hobbes by the two philosophic friends did not come about. It played a not unimportant role, however, in the confrontation Strauss and Kojève engaged in two decades later following Strauss's interpretation of Xenophon's *Hiero*, and thus found its place in the most significant resumption of the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes* [Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns] and in the most penetrating public dialogue of two philosophers about the relation of philosophy and politics that the twentieth century has on record.¹⁷

What the work on the critique of religion as well as the research regarding the Hegel-Hobbes connection at first delayed, then brought to a halt, were "philological excesses" [*philologische Ausschweifungen*] with which Strauss became engaged in the spring of 1934¹⁸ and out of which two new Hobbes projects would soon grow. At the beginning of March, the duke of Devonshire had granted Strauss access to unpublished documents from Hobbes's period with the Cavendish family at a castle in Derbyshire. In the Hobbes papers at Chatsworth, Strauss came across not only a series of texts, including drafts of *De corpore* and *De homine*, that he thought worth editing; he discovered above all documents that seemed promising for bringing light to the darkness of Hobbes's philosophic development up to the systematic presentation of his political science in *The Elements of Law*, during the writing of which the author was already older than forty. Along with previously unknown excerpts from Aristotle made by Hobbes, which Strauss dug up in Chatsworth, his special attention was given to a manuscript with the title *Essayes*, which involved an earlier and shorter version of *Horae subsecivae*, anonymously published in 1620. Strauss suspected that he had found in the *Essayes*, which the archive in Chatsworth had not assigned to the Hobbes papers, the first writing by Hobbes, or in case Hobbes's authorship could not be established conclusively, at least a work that had been composed under Hobbes's determining influence, since besides Hobbes himself, from whose hand the manuscript in Strauss's judgment stemmed, the only possible author of both the *Essayes* and *Horae subsecivae* was Hobbes's longtime student

58 n. 1 (German original in *GS*, 3:75 n. 60). Cf. the letters from Strauss to Klein of April 9 and October 10, 1934, *GS*, 3:497 and 523–24, to Kojève of May 9, 1935, and from Kojève to Strauss of November 2, 1936 (*On Tyranny*, 230 and 231–33).

17. Leo Strauss, *De la tyrannie. Précédé de Hiéron de Xénophon et suivi de Tyrannie et Sagesse par Alexandre Kojève* (Paris, 1954); cf. in particular *On Tyranny*, 186 and 192.

18. Letters of February 14 and April 9, 1934, to Klein, *GS*, 3:493–94 and 496. Cf. the letter of August 18, 1934, to Krüger, p. 441.

and friend, William Cavendish, future second earl of Devonshire.¹⁹ The find was of all the greater importance for Strauss as it held out the prospect of unexpected historical support for and biographical corroboration of the thesis, at which Strauss had arrived based on a careful interpretation of the published writings of Hobbes, that the basis of Hobbes's political philosophy was in no way to be sought in his natural science, that Hobbes's political science preceded, both essentially and in its genesis, his "discovery" of Euclid and the turn to Galileo's method and was not bound to them.

Against this background Strauss conceived two new Hobbes projects in England: one, the plan of an edition of Hobbes, in the center of which would be the *Essayes*; the other, the reconstruction of the history of the development of Hobbes's political science as a kind of prolegomenon to its analysis and critique. While the edition of Hobbes ultimately foundered after some initially promising negotiations with Cambridge University Press,²⁰ Strauss realized the other project, to which his "philological excesses" had (mis)led. He wrote the "history of the development"²¹ without in any way making it dependent on the find at Chatsworth that had inspired the change in his research plans. Strauss is so far from wanting to expose the presentation of the genesis of Hobbes's political science to possible objections, which could rely on a controversy about the authorship of the *Essayes*, that he completely leaves aside the find in the German original of the book. In the English translation he confines himself to an indication in the preface without saying a word about the editorial project that occupied him for many months in 1934.²² In May of 1935 the "history of the development," and thus the

19. Letters of April 9, 1934, to Klein, *GS*, 3:496, and of the same day to Kojève, *On Tyranny*, 225; letter of August 18, 1934, to Krüger, *GS*, 3:441. See *Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, preface, xvi and xvi-xvii n. 1.

20. Letters of April 25, May 20, June 23, October 10, October 13, October 15, and December 6, 1934, to Klein, *GS*, 3:502, 506, 518, 522, 527, 529, and 531.

21. "I am writing a history of the development of Hobbesian morality, for which I could track down a lot of material. I want it to introduce my edition of Hobbes's unpublished writings." Letter of August 18, 1934, to Krüger, *GS*, 3:441. "Provisionally I will publish an introduction to the Moreh [Guide of the Perplexed] with the title: 'Hobbes's Political Science in Its Development,' which should come out next year with Oxford Press." Letter of October 2, 1935, to Gershom Scholem, p. 716. Cf. the letters of June 23, October 10, and October 13, 1934, to Klein, pp. 517-18, 523, 528.

22. "This very sparse material does not permit of a definite answer to the question of Hobbes's early thought in all its aspects. The case would be different if a Chatsworth MS., not indeed belonging to the Hobbes papers, but, as far as I can judge, written in Hobbes's hand, could be used as a source for Hobbes's early thought. There is reason for assuming that if this manuscript is not the earliest writing of Hobbes himself, his was the decisive influence in its

first major Hobbes study by Strauss, was available in typescript, but no German publisher was willing to bring the book out.²³ In England there was hesitation to get involved in a translation of a manuscript before it appeared as a book in the original language. Strauss contemplated publication in a French translation, which Alexandre Kojève might see to, until the officials at Oxford University Press, thanks to an intervention by Sir Ernest Barker, became willing to depart from practice and make an exception in an exceptional case, as noted on the title page of *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes* by the addition: *Translated from the German Manuscript*.²⁴

If the "philological excesses" brought about by the visit to Chatsworth in March of 1934 (mis)led Strauss into writing a book that he had not intended to write and that remains, with its "history of the development" approach, without an equivalent in Strauss's œuvre, they did not divert him from the

composition." *Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, preface, xvi (new edition, xii). On the further fate of the *Essayes*, which have been published in the meantime, see Friedrich O. Wolf, *Die neue Wissenschaft des Thomas Hobbes. Zu den Grundlagen der politischen Philosophie der Neuzeit. Mit Hobbes' Essayes of 1. Arrogance, 2. Ambition, 3. Affectation, 4. Detraction, 5. Selfe-will, 6. Masters and Servants, 7. Expences, 8. Visitations, 9. Death, 10. Readinge of Histories* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1969), 113–67. The text of the *Essayes* is on pp. 135–67. See also—supported by linguistic computer analyses for the clarification of authorship, with a history of the *Horae subsecivae* and Strauss's discovery as well as an evaluation of the significance of the find for the understanding of Hobbes's philosophic development—the partial edition: Thomas Hobbes, *Three Discourses: A Critical Modern Edition of Newly Identified Work of the Young Hobbes*, ed. Noel B. Reynolds and Arlene W. Saxonhouse (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

23. Cf. the editor's preface in *GS*, 2:x. [As regards the publication of Strauss's "second book-length work, *Philosophie und Gesetz* (*Philosophy and Law*)," Heinrich Meier makes the following observation in his introduction to volume 2 of the *Gesammelte Schriften* (pp. x–xi): "The volume's appearance on the Maimonides anniversary did not result, however, in either greater circulation or an appreciable public reception. Since it was a publication by a 'Jewish author' on a 'Jewish subject' at a Jewish publishing house—a circumstance that alone made it possible to publish *Philosophie und Gesetz* in the Germany of 1935—it went virtually unnoticed beyond the few Jewish organs still in existence. Most libraries in Germany were closed to it. It did not even make it into the holdings of some university libraries." "Thus," Meier continues in a footnote, "in the case of his monograph *Hobbes' politische Wissenschaft*, which obviously dealt with a 'non-Jewish subject,' all of Strauss's attempts in 1935 to find a German publisher, or at least a German journal that would be willing to publish the study in several parts, came to nothing." Parts of Meier's introduction are available in English translation in Heinrich Meier, "How Strauss Became Strauss," trans. Marcus Brainard, in *Enlightening Revolutions: Essays in Honor of Ralph Lerner*, ed. Svetozar Minkov (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006), 364, 374 n. 3.].

24. On the search for a publisher for *Hobbes' politische Wissenschaft in ihrer Genesis*, see the exchange with Krüger (May 12 and June 2, 1935, *GS*, 3:443, 447, 448), with Klein (October 13, 1934, December 6, 1934, January 8, 1935, May 6, 1935, *GS*, 3:528, 531–32, 536, 539), and with Löwith (June 24, June 28, July 13, July 17, 1935, *GS*, 3:651–52, 655–56).

primary endeavor, which he had been pursuing in his confrontation with Hobbes since 1930. Of all Strauss's books, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Its Genesis* comes closest in a way—if we disregard for a moment the spectacular confrontation between the philosophic positions of Hobbes and Plato in the last chapter²⁵—to the conventions and standards of a study in the “history of ideas” and is furthest from Strauss's own characteristic approach, from his philosophic signature as an interpreter. That the philosophic intention which is determinative for Strauss in *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes* retreats behind the historical interest in the founder of the modern philosophic tradition presumably contributed not inconsiderably to the wide reception of the book. As the last paragraph of the Schmitt essay of 1932 expressed with all the clarity one could wish for, however, Strauss's historical interest aimed beyond Hobbes himself and backward. It was directed from the start at recovering the horizon within which Hobbes—according to Strauss's judgment at the time—had laid the basis for the modern tradition. It was in the service of a wide-ranging as well as deep-reaching revision of the history of philosophy, of a critical retrieval of the Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns, of a radical enterprise of examination of, and therewith ultimately of liberation from, the alleged self-evidence, the ingrained habits of thinking, the basic assumptions run to prejudices, and the unquestioned historical decisions in the philosophy of the present as in the philosophic tradition. The particular interest that Strauss takes in Hobbes pertains, in Strauss's own words toward the end of the introduction to *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, to that “fertile moment when the tradition stemming from antiquity had begun to totter and a tradition of modern science had not yet been built and fortified. In this moment,” says Strauss of Hobbes, “he, and only he, posed the fundamental question of the right life of man and the right order of human living together. This moment became decisive for the entire subsequent period: in it the foundation was laid on which the modern development of political science utterly rests, and on the basis of which alone can modern thought be radically understood.”* The parallel to that fertile moment, when the tradition stemming from Hobbes began to

25. The confrontation, which attests to a penetrating engagement with Plato, was possibly worked out only later, perhaps after the completion of the original version of the book manuscript; cf. the letters of October 10 and October 13, 1934, to Klein, *GS*, 3:523, 527–28, and 528–29, as well as the letter of May 12, 1935, to Krüger, pp. 443 and 446. But whatever may have been the case with the genesis of the book in this regard, the dialogue between Hobbes and Plato in an unusually long and weighty final chapter, which shows Strauss “at his best,” distinguishes it in various respects from the rest of the study.

* All translations from *Hobbes' politische Wissenschaft in ihrer Genesis* are our own—TRANS.

totter (not least because of Nietzsche and Heidegger) and when Strauss began his enterprise (first of all in dialogue with Heidegger and Nietzsche), is as evident as the philosophic thrust of his enterprise: to deconstruct, in reverse order from the historical development, the doctrinal contents of the philosophic tradition, and to seek them out in their origin in order to break through the petrification of philosophy in the tradition—in any tradition—and to lay bare the fundamental questions by which philosophy is set in motion and kept in motion.²⁶

If we consider what significance Strauss attributes to the fertile moment in which Hobbes recognized that the tradition had begun to totter and began to philosophize, what attentiveness Strauss bestows upon Hobbes because of his greater “radicalness” as compared with the thinkers who followed him, and what justification Strauss gives for going back from Spinoza to Hobbes with his “incomparably more original” philosophizing,²⁷ we are able to estimate the weight of the critique that he levels at Hobbes in the last chapter, contrasting Hobbes directly with Socrates, precisely in view of Hobbes’s lack of radicalness and his failure to overcome dependence on

26. For a more detailed discussion, see my essay *Die Denkbewegung von Leo Strauss. Die Geschichte der Philosophie und die Intention des Philosophen* (Stuttgart-Weimar, 1996). [This text is available in English translation as “The History of Philosophy and the Intention of the Philosopher: Reflections on Leo Strauss”; it is the second chapter of Heinrich Meier’s *Leo Strauss and the Theologico-Political Problem*, trans. Marcus Brainard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 53–73.]

27. In the MS of 1931–32 the statement about the “fertile moment,” which later finds a place, in significantly shortened form, in the introduction of the Hobbes book, occurs in the context of a comparison of Spinoza and Hobbes: “The inclination to understand Hobbes starting from Spinoza, which diminishes the understanding of the Englishman, if it does not make it impossible, can be combated successfully only by clarifying what the celebrated ‘boldness’ of Spinoza amounts to. Spinoza is above all bolder than Hobbes because he, being based on Hobbes’s and Descartes’s foundation of modern philosophy, drew, more decisively than both of them, certain consequences that achieved general recognition only in the nineteenth century. He could be bolder than his teachers because he no longer had to found modern philosophy; his boldness is bought at the price of radicalness: he is *already caught up in the modern tradition*. This is not at all to admit that he distanced himself from the premodern tradition further than Hobbes. If one considers what significance the traditional ideal of theory and the concept of *beatitudo* [bliss], which is inseparable from that ideal, have for Spinoza, and if one considers, on the other hand, that Hobbes explicitly abandons this basic presupposition of premodern philosophy, one gets a different picture from the conventional one, even of the ‘advanced-ness’ of Spinoza as compared with Hobbes. *Hobbes philosophizes in that fertile moment when the tradition stemming from antiquity had begun to totter and a tradition of modern science had not yet been built and fortified—Spinoza rescued the traditional ideal of theory, which he never doubted, within the modern tradition he came upon: Hobbes is incomparably more original than Spinoza*” (pp. 79–80).

the tradition: Hobbes's "unradical character" [*Unradikalität*], as it is called there, "is the consequence of the fact that for Hobbes political science is *self-evident*." Hobbes presupposes what he first and foremost would have to reexamine and establish with reasons. He builds on a tradition whose foundations he does not call into question and thus does not know how to lay by himself: "Hobbes does not inquire into the possibility and necessity of political science; in other words, he does not inquire into the teachability and, prior to that, into the essence of virtue and thus into the purpose of the state, because these questions have been answered for him by the tradition, or rather by the common consciousness. The purpose of the state is for him 'self-evidently' peace—namely, peace at any price. The presupposition of this self-evidence is that (violent) death is the first and greatest and highest evil. This presupposition does not appear to him to be in need of criticism, of being discussed, of being talked through."²⁸ In the manuscript of 1931–32 Strauss had more precisely elucidated his most fundamental critique that he would still maintain even two decades later in *Natural Right and History*:²⁹ "For Hobbes, social life or peace functions 'self-evidently' as a standard. This standard is not clarified; it is taken without consideration from life, or rather from the scientific tradition. This means: Hobbes *neglects* the question without an answer to which political science cannot be science. He does not begin with the question: Which, then, is the right order of human living together? or with the equivalent question, τι εστιν ἀρετή; [What is virtue?]. To the question of the essence of virtue was connected the other question: Is virtue teachable? Inasmuch as Hobbes neglects the question of the essence of virtue, i.e., presupposes that it has already been answered, there cannot be a problem for him in the teachability of virtue: political science needs merely to be erected and presented; as a science it is 'self-evidently' teachable. Hobbes neglects the question of the essence of virtue and of the teachability of virtue because to him the idea of political science is self-evident: so much is he under the spell of the tradition that he opposes. If Hobbes can be regarded as a representative of modern 'rationalism,' we may say: this 'rationalism' became possible only because it left the primary

28. GS, 3:173. Cf., before this, the statement: "That it depends not on the proclamation but on the justification of the new ideal, that such a justification, that political science is possible and necessary—this fundamental presupposition of the philosophic tradition is not doubted for a moment by Hobbes, who, incidentally, rejects this tradition root and branch" (p. 156 [*Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 136]).

29. "Hobbes was indebted to tradition for a single, but momentous, idea: he accepted on trust the view that political philosophy or political science is possible or necessary." *Natural Right and History*, 167.

questions unposed as having already been answered by the tradition."³⁰ To the word *neglects* [*versaümt*] in his statement "Hobbes *neglects* the question without an answer to which political science cannot be science," Strauss appends a footnote, which, in contrast to the critique itself that Strauss levels at Hobbes, will not be included in *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*: "We owe this expression to Heidegger; see *Sein und Zeit* 1:24 and 89ff.* Heidegger's idea of the 'destruction of the tradition' first made possible the investigation conducted in this and in the previous paragraphs."³¹

What basis does Strauss have in mind when, departing from the German and the initially intended English title,³² he gives the English translation the subtitle *Its Basis and Its Genesis*? The preface that Strauss wrote for the English translation answers our question with the following pointed disclosure: "Hobbes's fundamental view of human life . . . , and not modern science . . . is the real basis of his political philosophy."³³ But is that the entire answer? How is "Hobbes's fundamental view of human life" to be taken in light of the critique that Strauss in the concluding chapter levels at Hobbes's "unradical character" [*Unradikalität*], at his dependence on the tradition, at his partiality to alleged self-evidence? Should the subtitle draw the attention of the reader, not only to the thesis of the book, but at the same time to the problematic and questionable character of the political philosophy of Hobbes, to its unquestioned presupposition or to its unaccounted-for basis?

The question concerning the basis of Hobbes's political philosophy presents itself with still greater acuteness if we consult the study to which the first Hobbes book was supposed to "serve as a bridge." For in *Hobbes's Critique of Religion* Strauss emphasizes not only that the historical difference between the philosophic politics of Socrates and Hobbes's refounding, with its rejection of ancient philosophy, was decisively determined by the historical appearance and the political effectiveness of revealed religion.³⁴ He states

30. MS of 1931–32, pp. 49–50.

* See *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 21 and 83ff.—TRANS.

31. MS of 1931–32, p. 49 n. 2. See *Die Denkbewegung von Leo Strauss*, 29ff. [Meier, *Leo Strauss and the Theologico-Political Problem*, 62ff.].

32. See n. 21 above: "Hobbes's Political Science in Its Development."

33. *Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, preface, xiv. Cf. p. xiii: "If the significance of Hobbes's principle of 'right' was to be duly recognized, it had, therefore, first to be shown that the real basis of his political philosophy is not modern science. To show this is the particular object of the present study."

34. "If order and peace were finally to come about, what was required, as it seemed, was a politics resting solely on the self-sufficient reflection of man. Such a politics had been

rather, with perfect clarity, that the critique of revelation is of "constitutive significance," that the "genuine *foundation*" of Hobbes's politics "and even of his whole philosophy" is concealed in that critique.³⁵ The question of the basis of Hobbes's political philosophy thus leads us to the question of the basis of the Hobbesian critique of religion. The chapter in which Strauss wanted to discuss this subject did not, in the manuscript of *Hobbes's Critique of Religion*, get beyond the heading, and a draft that could fill in the holes breaks off after a sketch of the opening. We must therefore have recourse to a very much later essay by Strauss, his last fundamental and comprehensive confrontation with Hobbes and his most deeply penetrating, if we want to receive an answer. Strauss gave the essay in which the "history of the development" of his work on Hobbes, stretching over a quarter of a century, culminates in 1954,³⁶ and in which the critique of revealed religion plays a central role, the title: "On the Basis of Hobbes's Political Philosophy."³⁷

elaborated by classical philosophy. But the philosophic politics that rested on the foundations conceived by Socrates had not only not refused an association with theology; it had also not *been able* to refuse this; in any case it had provided theological politics with some of its most dangerous weapons. Hence, a *new* politics was required that would not merely be independent of theology, but that would also make any relapse into theological politics impossible for all future time. In other words, what was required was a politics that did not, like classical politics, *precede* revelation and hence, as it seemed, had not risen to meet the claim of revelation, but rather one that contended with this claim from the outset, and therefore *succeeded* revelation. Hence, the critique of revelation is not merely a subsequent, though necessary, *supplement* to Hobbesian politics, but is its *presupposition*, indeed the presupposition of Hobbes's philosophy in general" (see p. 28, in this volume). Cf. p. 26, in this volume: "revelation or the polemic against revelation is what makes the acceptance of classical politics impossible for Hobbes."

35. Pp. 29–30, in this volume. See n. 34 and cf. p. 26, in this volume.

36. Strauss made Hobbes's political philosophy the subject of seminars after 1954, too (as in the winter of 1964 at the University of Chicago), and he came back to Hobbes in his writings (for instance, in *Thoughts on Machiavelli* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1958), 174ff., 279, 311; *The City and Man* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1964), 44, 88f., 143f., or *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 66, 143–45, 211–13), but he later published only two other short articles on books about Hobbes: the review of C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke*, *Southwestern Social Science Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (June 1964): 69–70, reprinted in *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy*, 229–31, and the review of Samuel I. Mintz, *The Hunting of Leviathan: Seventeenth-Century Reactions to the Materialism and Moral Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes*, *Modern Philology* 62, no. 3 (February 1965): 253–55.

37. The essay published in French translation, which was occasioned by a recent publication on Hobbes by Raymond Polin, was printed in *What Is Political Philosophy? And Other Studies* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1959), 170–96. Note the self-criticism regarding the theme of "genesis" and "development" respectively, which is formulated in the penultimate paragraph of the essay: "The most satisfactory section of Polin's study is his critique of the attempt to

Why, after finishing the manuscript of *Hobbes' politische Wissenschaft in ihrer Genesis* in May 1935, did Strauss, as he had intended to, not take up *Hobbes's Critique of Religion* again and finish writing it? Two explanations can be offered: First, the difficulties with which he had to struggle in the publication of the first Hobbes monograph would not have encouraged him to compose another book on Hobbes in German with most uncertain prospects of its being placed anywhere in the foreseeable future. Second, Strauss, as he puts it in December 1935 to Krüger, was "temporarily deferring Hobbes" in order "to gain clarity first of all about the history of Platonism in the Islamic and Jewish Middle Ages." His concentration on the "history of Platonism," which probably started with his work on the last chapter of *Hobbes' politische Wissenschaft in ihrer Genesis* and the completion of *Philosophie und Gesetz* [Philosophy and Law], is evidenced not only by letters³⁸ but in particular by the essay that he was writing during the period from August to October 1935, "Quelques remarques sur la science politique de Maïmonide et de Fârâbi" [Some Remarks on the Political Sci-

trace in Hobbes's writings a development from an early recognition of 'honor' as 'aristocratic virtue' to a later rejection of this principle. That attempt was occasioned by the observation that Hobbes may have been responsible for the thoughts expressed in *Horae Subsecivae*, i.e., by the consideration of a problem which is still unsolved" (p. 195). The note, about which Strauss, in the preface of 1964 [to *Hobbes' politische Wissenschaft*], says that only there did he succeed "in laying bare the simple leading thought of Hobbes's doctrine of man" (p. 8), reads: "According to Hobbes, the only peculiarity of man's mind which precedes the invention of speech, i.e., the only natural peculiarity of man's mind, is the faculty of considering phenomena as causes of possible effects, as distinguished from the faculty of seeking the causes or means that produce 'an effect imagined,' the latter faculty being 'common to man and beast': not 'teleological' but 'causal' thinking is peculiar to man. The reason why Hobbes transformed the traditional definition of man as the rational animal into the definition of man as the animal which can 'inquire consequences' and hence which is capable of science, i.e., 'knowledge of consequences,' is that the traditional definition implies that man is by nature a social animal, and Hobbes must reject this implication (*De cive*, I, 2). As a consequence, the relation between man's natural peculiarity and speech becomes obscure. On the other hand, Hobbes is able to deduce from his definition of man his characteristic doctrine of man: man alone can consider himself as a cause of possible effects, i.e., man can be aware of his power; he can be concerned with power; he can desire to possess power; he can seek confirmation for his wish to be powerful by having his power recognized by others, i.e., he can be vain or proud; he can be hungry with future hunger, he can anticipate future dangers, he can be haunted by long-range fear. Cf. *Leviathan*, chs. 3 (15), 5 (27, 29), 6 (33-36), 11 (64), and *De homine* X, 3." [The page numbers of *Leviathan* in this footnote refer to the Blackwell's Political Texts edition.]

38. Letter of December 25, 1935, to Krüger, GS, 3:450. Note the letter of October 2, 1935, to Scholem, p. 716.

ence of Maimonides and Farabi].³⁹ The most important reason for Strauss's turn to Alfarabi, Avicenna, Averroes, and Maimonides, however, was that he held Platonic political philosophy to be superior to the political philosophy of Hobbes, Spinoza, and their modern successors, precisely with regard to the critique of revelation, that in Strauss's judgment the basis of the modern enlightenment did not reach that of the philosophic enlightenment of the Middle Ages in radicality and strength.⁴⁰

Through the intensive study of the Platonic political philosophers of the Middle Ages—above all of Alfarabi, in whom Strauss recognizes the inaugurator of the first great enterprise to restore philosophy after the irruption of revealed religions—Strauss arrives, in the second half of 1935 and in the first months of 1936, not only at a more precise understanding of the philosophic foundations of the medieval philosophers' critique of religion, but also at a greater clarity in regard to the political dimension of their confrontation with revealed religion. The new historical challenge found expression in the fact, among other things, that a different significance was attached to war and courage in the philosophic politics of the Arab founding fathers than had been the case with Plato or Aristotle, who did not see themselves as confronted by an enemy with a claim to universal mission and rule.⁴¹ A view sharpened by

39. *GS*, 2:125–65. [Translated by Robert Bartlett, *Interpretation* 18, no. 1 (Fall 1990): 3–30.]

40. See the editor's preface in *GS*, 2:xvi–xxv. [Translated as “How Strauss Became Strauss” in Minkov, *Enlightening Revolutions*.]

41. On the two “Notes additionelles” [additional notes], which Strauss, at the last minute, attached to the already typeset “Quelques remarques sur la science politique de Maïmonide et de Fârâbi,” the first of which concerned the reevaluation of courage and the second of which concerned the new role of rhetoric among the Arab Platonic philosophers in contrast to Plato himself, Strauss writes, in a letter of May 17, 1936, to Paul Kraus: “I have written yet another long note to a passage in my Vajda essay, which, because it is much more interesting and important than the entire essay, must get in without fail: on fortitudo [courage] among the falâsifa, and a short note on rhetoric among them. I have seen, namely, that Averroes, in his paraphrase of the passage in the Republic where the discussion is about the schurût [service] of the philosopher-kings, smuggles in things that are not at all in Plato, but which are already to be found in Abû Nasr [al-Fârâbi]. I thereby gain for the first time a sure handle on what sets off the falâsifa from Plato, since their faith in revelation has become completely doubtful to me. I will send you both notes tomorrow with the request that you correct the French and then pass them on to Vajda. Retribuat tibi Deus regratiationem completam! [May God return full gratitude to you] [From Averroës, in *Libros Decem Moraliū Nicomachiorum Expositio*, in *Aristotelis Opera cum Averrois Commentariis* (Venice: Apud Iunctas, 1562), vol. 3, folio 160 G–H: “et Deus retribuat ei pro nobis regratiationem completam” (May God return full gratitude to him on our behalf).] I am to the highest degree—in ultimitate tensionis [in the utmost of tension]. That I

his engagement with the medieval philosophers allows Strauss to understand and classify more precisely, first for Hobbes and later for Machiavelli, the reassessment of war and foreign policy that the founding fathers of modern political philosophy established in critical opposition to ancient philosophy. Thus, months after finishing the manuscript of *Hobbes' politische Wissenschaft in ihrer Genesis*, Strauss inserts in the English translation a new paragraph of two pages in print on the primacy of foreign policy in Hobbes, which deploys its preeminent meaning only against the background of the philosophic politics of Hobbes conceived in the encounter with revealed religion.⁴²

In October 1964, shortly after his sixty-fifth birthday, Strauss, in the preface to *Hobbes' politische Wissenschaft*, looked back at his beginnings in Germany in order to recall the challenge that the theology of revelation had meant for him since the twenties: "The reawakening of theology, which for me is marked by the names of Karl Barth and Franz Rosenzweig, seemed to make it necessary to study the extent to which the critique of orthodox—Jewish and Christian—theology deserved to be victorious." He then adds: "The theologico-political problem has since remained *the* theme of my studies."⁴³ This statement must have come as a surprise to many. Not only for the broader scholarly public, which knew the author of *Natural Right and History* and renowned Robert M. Hutchins Distinguished Service Professor of Political Philosophy at the University of Chicago first and foremost as a critic of historicism, positivism, or scientism and which saw in his philosophic enterprise the attempt at a revival of the classical natural right tradition. The hint could also have astonished quite a number of those who belonged to or were in close contact with the school of thought that was rapidly branching out and gaining influence and that Strauss had founded after his arrival in the United States, first during his ten-year teaching activity at the New School of Social Research in New York but above all since 1949 at the University of Chicago, which became, with the appointment of Strauss, the epicenter of political philosophy for two decades. The great majority of readers of Strauss in the United States, and his students in particular, would much sooner have expected Strauss to name the quarrel between the ancients and the moderns

have lived, as Aunt Alma would say, to see this!" (The letter was kindly made available to me by Jenny Strauss Clay in the fall of 2000.)

42. *GS*, 3:183–84. See, with further references, the editor's preface in *GS*, 2:xxii with n. 25 ("How Strauss Became Strauss," 369, 378 n. 25), and cf. the passage quoted above in n. 34 on philosophic politics from *Hobbes's Critique of Religion*.

43. *GS*, 3:7–8. "Preface to Spinoza's Critique of Religion," in *Liberalism Ancient and Modern* (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 224–49, in particular, pp. 224 and 254–57.

in philosophy as the theme of his work. Accordingly, the festschrift that colleagues, friends, and students dedicated to him for his sixty-fifth birthday bears the title *Ancients and Moderns*.

The statement—which is as laconic as it is characteristic—on the theologico-political problem properly illuminates the center and the coherence of Strauss's thematically wide-ranging oeuvre. It occurs in the first, and at the same time last, text in which Strauss, after an interruption of almost three decades, addresses German-speaking readers again. To understand correctly the perspective from which the preface to *Hobbes' politische Wissenschaft* was written, one has to know that in 1965, the year in which the volume would appear that comprised both the first publication of the German original of the Hobbes book he had finished thirty years earlier and the reprint of "Notes on Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*," first published in September 1932, was the same year for which Strauss had accepted an invitation to return, as a visiting professor, to the University of Hamburg, where he had received his doctorate under the direction of Ernst Cassirer in 1921, with a dissertation on the problem of knowledge in Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi. At the last moment, health reasons brought his plan of teaching philosophy at Hamburg to nothing, and Strauss was not able to receive in person the honorary doctorate from the University of Hamburg in 1965.⁴⁴ A short visit in 1954, which took him to Freiburg im Breisgau, Heidelberg, and to his place of birth in Kirchhain, Hessen, thus remained his sole stay in Germany since he had left Berlin in 1932 for Paris and later London and Cambridge.

When Strauss in 1964, with his return to Germany as both author and teacher in view, pointed to the "theologico-political problem" as the unifying theme of his studies, he apparently assumed that this hint was more likely to be understood and taken up in Germany than anywhere else. In fact, he never expressed more succinctly, before or afterward, the centrality of political philosophy for his work. However, Strauss's abbreviated formulation for the urgency of the confrontation with the theological and the political alternative to philosophy could hardly find an echo among the German-speaking audience before a new access to political philosophy had been opened up. His formulation had to meet with incomprehension as long as the confrontation

44. Letters of June 3, 1964, to Löwith, *GS*, 3:690–91 and of October 19, 1964, to Klein, p. 603. Strauss writes to Klaus Oehler on June 26, 1964: "You may have heard that I have accepted an invitation from the 'Dept. of Philosophy' at the University of Hamburg to teach there during the summer semester of 1965. I very much look forward to seeing you then again. If only my health doesn't foil my plans." (I am grateful to Klaus Oehler for making available to me the Strauss letters he has in his possession.)

with the theological and the political alternative was not grasped as the core of political philosophy itself.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, Strauss's autobiographical hint in the preface to the Hobbes book of 1935 is in the right place. For in the great retrial in which, beginning in 1929–30, Strauss engaged on behalf of an apparently obsolete because "historically decided" controversy, the issue from the beginning was not only the examination of the different responses that the ancients and the moderns made to the theologico-political challenge, but at the same time the elucidation of the historical process that made the theologico-political problem increasingly escape the attention of philosophers. In *Hobbes' politische Wissenschaft in ihrer Genesis*, Strauss attempts to grasp at its beginning, in Hobbes, the development that comes to an end in the "philosophy of culture" of the present. The theologico-political problem has vanished for liberal "philosophy of culture," which Strauss submitted to a philosophic critique for the first time in "Notes on Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*" for its parceling of life into a multiplicity of "autonomous provinces of culture." Therefore, liberal "philosophy of culture" no longer knows that philosophy, according to its natural meaning, is a way of life. A knowledge that must fade away as the question of the one thing needful is relativized in a thought of autonomous areas or provinces. Philosophy, according to the modern concept of culture, is one area among others, one province of culture along with art, religion, politics, the economy, and so on.

In an enigmatic footnote in *Philosophy and Law* in 1935, Strauss says that a radical critique of the modern concept of culture is possible only in the form of a theologico-political treatise. However, such a treatise would have to have, "if it is not to lead once again to the foundation of 'culture,' exactly the opposite tendency of the theologico-political treatises of the seventeenth century, in particular those of Hobbes and Spinoza."⁴⁶ The thrust of those

45. See, in this connection, besides the second chapter, "The History of Philosophy and the Intention of the Philosopher: Reflections on Leo Strauss," the fourth chapter, "Why Political Philosophy?" in Meier, *Leo Strauss and the Theologico-Political Problem*.

46. *Philosophie und Gesetz*, in *GS*, 2:30–31 n. 2. [We have made use of, while modifying, the already existing English translation of this work: *Philosophy and Law: Contributions to the Understanding of Maimonides and His Predecessors*, trans. Eve Adler (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 138 n. 2.] The following argument is developed more fully in the third part of my epilogue, "Eine theologische oder eine philosophische Politik der Freundschaft?" [A Theological or Philosophical Politics of Friendship?] in *Carl Schmitt, Leo Strauss und "Der Begriff des Politischen." Zu einem Dialog unter Abwesenden*, new enlarged ed. (Stuttgart-Weimar, 1998), 182–90. [The English translation by Harvey J. Lomax, *Carl Schmitt and Leo Strauss: The Hidden Dialogues*, does not contain Meier's epilogue. But see now *Leo Strauss and the Theologico-Political Problem*, 9–28.]

theologico-political treatises aimed at the recovery and the persistent safeguarding of the *libertas philosophandi* [the freedom to philosophize], by means of an effective separation of politics from theology. What began with the emancipation of politics from theology results ultimately, after the successful unleashing of a world of increasingly instrumental rationality and growing prosperity, in a state of incomprehension of and indifference to the original sense of the theologico-political critique that Hobbes and Spinoza carried out, a state in which the demands of politics are rejected with the same matter-of-factness as those of religion. This state finds its conspicuous expression in the existence of the bourgeois, who closes himself off from all claims that aim at the whole, and in a philosophy that no longer knows how to answer the question "Why philosophy?" because it has lost the awareness of the demanding alternatives in a realm of merely private affairs in which everything appears to be compatible with everything else.

A theologico-political treatise with "exactly the opposite tendency" of the treatises that laid the ground for the historical development leading toward "philosophy of culture"—or later to "postmodernism"—would accordingly have to make perfectly clear once again the claims that both politics and religion contain and to reawaken the understanding of the connection that exists between the two. In this sense, each of Strauss's books since 1935, beginning with *Philosophy and Law* and continuing to the last title, published from his papers, *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy*, can be called a theologico-political treatise. They all have in common the fact that Strauss, whether in dialogue with political philosophers of the past or with philosophers of the present, whether in a commentary or in a direct encounter, makes the theological and the political challenge as strong as he can make it. And just as consistently does he emphasize in these treatises the insuperable opposition that exists between the philosophic life and its most powerful opponent, faith in revelation. Both—making the alternative as strong as possible and sharply emphasizing the most profound opposition—are animated by the intention to counteract the avoidance of the most important question, the question of the right or the best life.

HOBBS'S CRITIQUE OF RELIGION

A Contribution to Understanding
the Enlightenment (1933-34)



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INTRODUCTION

§1. Occasion and Purpose of the Study

If the struggle between belief and unbelief is “the proper, sole, and deepest theme of all world and human history,”¹ Hobbes’s critique of religion merits the greatest attention. Of the numerous challenges to religion, revealed as well as natural, brought forth by the classical age of the critique of religion—the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—there are not many that can match Hobbes’s *Leviathan* in historical effectiveness, few that can match it in decisiveness of denial, and none that can match it in radicalism of justification [*Begründung*]. Spinoza’s theologico-political treatise is indeed, as Hobbes himself acknowledged, “bolder” than *Leviathan*, i.e., more reckless in drawing out and stating its consequences; but this boldness is purchased at the price of renouncing the proper foundation of the critique, which is found much more in *Leviathan* than in the theologico-political treatise.

1. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Noten und Abhandlungen zum besseren Verständnis des West-Östlichen Divans: Israel in der Wüste* [Notes and Discourses for the Better Understanding of the Western-Eastern Divan: Israel in the Desert]. [The exact German reference is to be found in *Goethes Werke*, vol. 2, *Gedichte und Epen*, 6th ed. (Hamburg: Christian Wegner Verlag, 1962), 208.]

Despite its very great significance, Hobbes's critique of religion has not previously been subjected to a systematic analysis. The reason for this neglect has to do with the conviction, common to supporters and opponents, that this critique was a necessary byproduct of Hobbes's *natural philosophy*. This conviction had a certain legitimacy as long as the older view that Hobbes's natural philosophy was a materialistic metaphysics held undisputed sway. But after the investigations, above all, of F. Tönnies established [*befestigt*] the view that Hobbes's natural philosophy is not so much a materialistic metaphysics as a foundation of modern natural science, the relation of this natural philosophy to the critique of religion had to become problematic. For even if one is also, like Tönnies, of the opinion that there is a necessary connection between modern natural science and the critique of religion, one still cannot pass over the fact that this connection is in any case not evident: precisely those men who deserve the greatest credit for founding [*Begründung*] modern natural science—Descartes, Newton, and Leibniz—were anything but enemies of belief. If, therefore, Hobbes's natural philosophy is to be characterized not immediately as materialistic metaphysics but rather initially as the foundation of modern natural science, and since, on the other hand, the connection between natural science and the critique of religion is in no way self-evident, an independent investigation of Hobbes's critique of religion is, in view of the latter's preeminent significance, a sensible undertaking.

Hobbes's critique of religion is thus often regarded, with initially dubious justice, as a merely secondary result of his natural philosophy. It remains to ask whether this critique should not be understood as more immediately part of his *political science*. It is ultimately no accident that his statements belonging to the critique of religion are to be found less in his natural scientific than in his political writings. No less than the explicitly entitled work of Spinoza, these latter are *theologico-political* treatises: more than a third of *De cive* and approximately one half of *Leviathan* are devoted to theological questions. If therefore there are compelling reasons for making an engagement with Hobbes's political science into a desired goal, his critique of religion requires an extensive analysis. A brief statement of these reasons is indispensable for the justification [*Rechtfertigung*] of our project.

Hobbes is the *founder of modern politics*. He himself made the claim on his own behalf that he was the first to raise politics to the rank of a science; and his contemporaries, whether in complete admiration or complete consternation, at least conceded to him that his politics constituted an unheard-of innovation. This view has been corrected by more recent developments in a few, but not essential, points. Admittedly, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century the prevailing Hobbes research could show more and more

that important elements of the Hobbesian teaching are attested to in the earlier literature; but on the basis of this evidence, through which Hobbes's work seemed temporarily to represent a self-realized fusion of traditional elements, the original impression is conclusively restored: even if this or that feature of Hobbesian politics was already to be found in the earlier literature, Hobbes gave them a unity that they did not have by themselves but that they could gain solely on the basis of an analysis undertaken from an altogether original point of view. There are indeed considerable features of Hobbesian politics that were seen as unsuitable by later thinkers and that were hence eliminated; but even today his harshest critics themselves admit that he was the first to develop the concept of *sovereignty* with full clarity; and since this concept is not just one concept among others but the foundation [*Fundament*] of modern politics,² Hobbes is the founder of modern politics. An understanding of Hobbes's political science, then, is the elementary precondition for any radical understanding of modern politics.

The doctrine of sovereignty in Hobbes's philosophy is connected, not only with his absolutist conception of the state, but also with his "pessimistic" view of human nature and his "materialistic" metaphysics. The [later] moderns in general retained the doctrine of sovereignty and abandoned the context in which that doctrine was originally developed. The presupposition of this procedure was the conviction that this connection was not necessary but merely conditioned by the historical situation of the seventeenth century, or rather, by Hobbes's prejudices. We shall not venture to decide whether this conviction is warranted. The presupposition for such a decision would be an impartial analysis of Hobbes's political science, which would not be possible without elaborate preparations. Belonging to these preparations in particular is the understanding of Hobbes's critique of religion, which, as we have already indicated, is an integral feature of his political science.

According to the reigning opinion, Hobbes's critique of religion is also an accidental epiphenomenon of the rise of modern politics. This judgment also requires reexamination. If indeed one may speak in general of a specifically *modern* concept of the state, which, as it seems, is permissible, that reexamination must be guided by the insight that there must also be a specifically modern metaphysics or theology, on the basis of which this concept of the state gains its evidence; for every view of man and the state implies a view of the world and God, whether theistic or atheistic. Whether Hobbes's

2. C. E. Vaughan, *Studies in the History of Political Philosophy Before and After Rousseau* (Manchester: University Press, Longmans, Green, 1925), 1:23 and 55.

theology, therefore, which one characterizes at the outset more appropriately as a critique of religion, is the presupposition of modern politics is a question that absolutely requires an investigation. In order for this investigation to be possible, it is first necessary to establish what Hobbes's teaching on the critique of religion actually says and means. The aim of the present treatment is to establish precisely that.

§2. Hobbes's Politics and the Critique of Revelation

Hobbes founded his political science in opposition to two frequently but not always allied traditions: the tradition of philosophic politics, whose originator was for him *Socrates*, and the tradition of theological politics, which appeals to *revelation*. Since revelation in his time was by far a greater authority than classical politics, his attack is directed principally against the tradition of theological politics, more exactly, against the dualism of temporal and spiritual power that was asserted or certainly not radically excluded by it. But in this confrontation the original and fundamental theme of politics does not enter the discussion; for every confrontation over the dualistic or monistic character of "power" has as its presupposition the explanation of the meaning of "power," the answer to the question of the meaning and purpose of the state; and on this question, Hobbes has only the tradition of philosophic politics to confront. Hence, Hobbes's genuine teaching comes together only in his critique of the philosophic politics of classical antiquity. But this critique would not have been possible without revelation and its denial; revelation or the polemic against revelation is what makes the acceptance of classical politics impossible for Hobbes.

Whatever else may turn out to be true in general about the relationship between the critique of religion and modern politics, Hobbes's politics is at any rate indissolubly connected with his critique of religion: religion is *the* enemy of this politics. For this politics is based on the axiom that violent death is the greatest evil;³ religion, by contrast, teaches that there is a greater evil even than violent death, namely, eternal punishment after death in hell; religion therefore denies the foundation of Hobbesian politics.⁴ Hence, this

3. Cf. especially *De cive*, epistola dedicatoria [epistle dedicatory], and *De cive* 1.7 [*De Cive: The Latin Version*, ed. Howard Warrender (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983)].

4. "[I]t is impossible that a Commonwealth should stand, where any other than the Sovereign, hath a power of giving greater rewards than Life; and of inflicting greater punishments, than Death. Now . . . Eternall life is a greater reward, than the life present; and Eternall

politics remains questionable as long as the teaching of religion is not refuted: it is *dependent* on the critique of religion.

The foundation of Hobbesian politics is admittedly called into question not only by religion: the philosophic tradition also denies that death is the greatest evil. But the objection of the philosophers is of significance for Hobbes only if it implies that death is not the greatest evil because there is a life after death; and according to his explicit view, it is precisely this presupposition that cannot be vouched for by reason, but only by revelation.⁵ Hence, according to Hobbes's own view, revelation is the only danger to his politics. This politics, therefore, is dependent not on a critique of religion in general so much as on a critique of *revealed* religion. Accordingly, it is no accident that of the eighteen chapters of *Leviathan* devoted to the critique of religion, only two chapters treat natural religion, by contrast with sixteen chapters that treat revealed religion. And not only this: Hobbes insists on the complete separation between philosophy, natural reason, on the one hand, and religion, on the other; the sole source of religion is revelation.⁶

torment a greater punishment than the death of Nature" (*Leviathan*, chap. 38, near the beginning). Cf. also the next comment. [Strauss says in *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes* (xiii) that he used the edition of *Leviathan* by A. D. Lindsay (London: J. M. Dent, 1914). We have used instead the more easily available edition of Richard Tuck *Leviathan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). All page numbers refer to the Tuck edition.]

5. "ratione naturali sciri non possunt, sed revelatione tantum . . . esse praemia et poenas post hanc vitam; animam esse immortalem et similia" ["cannot be understood by natural reason, but only by revelation; . . . that there are rewards, and punishments after this life; that the soul is immortal . . . and the like"]. *De cive* 17.13. [We have used the translation of *De cive* attributed to Hobbes himself, readily available in *Man and Citizen (De Homine and De Cive)*, ed. Bernard Gert, T. S. K. Scott-Craig, and Charles T. Wood (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991).] "There be some that . . . will not have the Law of Nature, to be those Rules which conduce to the preservation of mans life on earth; but to the attaining of an eternall felicity after death . . . But . . . there is no naturall knowledge of mans estate after death . . . but onely a beliefe grounded upon other mens saying, that they know it supernaturally, or that they know those, that knew them, that knew others, that knew it supernaturally." *Leviathan*, chap. 15 (103).

6. "Contra hanc Empusam [sc. Scholasticam θεωλογία] exorcismus, credo, melior excogitari non potest, quam ut religionis . . . regulae . . . a philosophiae regulis . . . distinguantur, quaeque religionis sunt Scripturae Sacrae, quae philosophiae sunt rationi naturali tribuantur." ["Against this Empusa (to wit, scholastic theology) I believe one cannot discover a better exorcism than to distinguish the rules . . . of religion . . . from the rules of philosophy, and to assign the things of religion to Holy Scripture, and the things of philosophy to natural reason."] *De corpore*, epistola dedicatoria. *Thomae Hobbes Malmesburiensis Opera philosophica quae latine scripsit omnia*, ed. William Molesworth (London: John Bohn, 1839–45), 1: epistle dedicatory. [Strauss refers, as is common, to Hobbes's Latin writings as *Opera Latina*, and we do the same from now on.]

Hobbes confines the natural knowledge of God and divine things within such narrow limits that he can ultimately even expel them root and branch from the realm of philosophy.⁷ Hence, by elucidating Hobbes's position on revelation, one accomplishes everything, or almost everything, that one generally requires in order to understand his position on religion.

In order to assess the entire significance that the critique of revelation has for Hobbes's politics, one must recall the situation in which this science* originated. Owing to the consequences of the Reformation, theological politics had become more questionable than ever before: theological politics seemed to lead by necessity, not to order and peace, but to the horrors of the wars of religion. If order and peace were finally to come about, what was required, as it seemed, was a politics resting solely on the self-sufficient reflection of man. Such a politics had been elaborated by classical philosophy. But the philosophic politics that rested on the foundations conceived by Socrates had not only not refused an association with theology; it had also not *been able* to refuse this; in any case it had provided theological politics with some of its most dangerous weapons.⁸ Hence, a *new* politics was required that would not merely be independent of theology but also make any relapse into theological politics impossible for all future time. In other words, what was required was not a politics that, like classical politics, *preceded* revelation and hence, as it seemed, had not risen to meet the claim of revelation, but rather one that contended with this claim from the outset, and therefore *succeeded* revelation. Hence, the critique of revelation is not merely a subsequent, though necessary, *supplement* to Hobbesian politics but its *presupposition*, indeed the presupposition of Hobbes's philosophy in general.

This claim, as must be conceded and emphasized immediately, stands in manifest contradiction with the appearance given by Hobbes's critique of revelation, and especially with his critique of theological politics: a glance at *Leviathan* shows that the critique of theological politics, which appears in the guise of a teaching resting on revelation about the Christian state, follows the purely rational teaching about man and state, that therefore Hobbes's critique of revelation rests on his elaborated philosophic teaching. This procedure seems to be fully unobjectionable. It is in fact not exposed to any considerable objection as long as philosophy, particularly philosophic politics, is held to be self-evident. But if this presupposition becomes doubt-

7. *De corpore* 1.8.

* Strauss seems to be referring here to Hobbes's political science—TRANS.

8. See especially *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (469–72).

ful, the question arises as to whether the structure of *Leviathan* does not conceal the real foundational relation between philosophic politics, indeed of philosophy in general, on the one hand, and the critique of revelation, on the other.

In view of what Hobbes claimed was the failure of all previous attempts to treat politics scientifically, one should suppose that it would have been obvious for him to consider seriously⁹ whether the question whose response is the task of political science—the question about the right order of human life as living together—is not already answered by revelation before it is asked, or whether this question can even be answered by human means at all and not rather by revelation alone, and whether, therefore, the politics of the philosophic tradition had not simply failed because it expected from human reason an achievement beyond its power. Possibilities of this kind, however, are excluded for Hobbes from the outset: it is not revelation to which he turns after he loses confidence in Aristotle and his teachers and students but Thucydides and then Euclid, Galileo, and Descartes. A *revelation*, in his view, cannot have the evidence, and hence the authority, that it would require in order to present the rules for human life and living together in a binding manner; and apart from that, political *science*, if only one has the right method at one's disposal, is self-evidently possible. Therefore, whereas theological politics, as it seems, may be confidently ignored, a serious confrontation with philosophic politics, with the politics of the classical philosophers, is necessary as a matter of principle. The basis for this confrontation is the possibility and necessity, acknowledged by both sides, of a political science, of a human ordering of human life. This positive agreement, decisively important despite or because of its inconspicuousness, corresponds to a negative agreement that immediately concerns us here: just as the *conditio sine qua non* [indispensable condition] for the Socratic question about the right life and the true state, from which the teaching of the philosophic tradition arose, is the decay of the belief in the divine laws of Greek antiquity, so too the decay of the belief in the authority of revelation is the *conditio sine qua non* for Hobbes's recovery of the Socratic question. Accordingly, the critique of revelation would merely be the explication of the occasion for Hobbes's political science, and therefore something that one usually tends to dispose of in a foreword or introduction, but not *more* than that. If this were really the case, the fact that approximately half of *Leviathan* is devoted to theological

9. As did *Pascal* in the same historical situation as Hobbes's, and according to kindred philosophic presuppositions; cf. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées et Opuscules*, ed. Léon Brunschvicg (Paris: Hachette, 1897), fragments 291 ff. and 331.

questions would itself be fully unexplainable. The belief in revelation is for Hobbes more than an accidental error, whether it be made by an individual or by entire epochs; namely, it is the ideal case of the typical obstacle, given with human nature itself, to knowledge of truth and the construction of the true state. Hence, the counterpart of Hobbes's critique of revelation is not Socr  tes-Plato's "critique" of the divine laws of Greek antiquity; rather, the critique of revelation has the same constitutive significance for Hobbes's politics that the critique of *sophistry* has for Platonic politics. The critique of revelation means this much, though not more, to Hobbes himself. But after he had engaged in the critique of revelation, having been compelled by the power that revelation exercised over his age, if not over him, it was no longer only his view but also the object of his critique that decided the character, as well as the significance, of that critique. Now, insofar as the desired goal of a political science, which arose for Hobbes in view of the failure of all previous politics, is called into question, or rather, is fulfilled by revelation, or at least loses its urgency, the critique of revelation becomes, in essence, the radical justification of that desired goal, the demonstration of the possibility and necessity of political science. In this sense, the critique of revelation is the necessary prolegomenon to Hobbes's politics: the genuine *founding* [*Grundlegung*] of that politics, indeed of his whole philosophy, is concealed in the critique of revelation.¹⁰ Since this founding, however, is less revealed than *concealed* in that critique, the task of analysis must be to extract the truly foundational elements of the critique of revelation from the thicket of arguments, some of which in fact only secure subsequently a view already established, or at most touch on a view being explained concurrently.

  3. The Different Versions of Hobbes's Critique of Religion

Hobbes developed his critique of religion in a systematic manner four times, and in fact each time within the framework of his political science: in *The Elements of Law* (1640), in *De cive* (1642 and 1647, respectively), and in the English and Latin versions of *Leviathan* (1651 and 1668, respectively).

10. One should understand fundamentally in the same way Spinoza's theologico-political treatise as a prolegomenon to his *Ethics*; cf. my writing, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997], 112ff. and 123ff. L  on Brunschvicg makes a similar judgment ("De la vraie et de la fausse conversion" [On True and False Conversion], *Revue de M  taphysique et de Morale*, 1932, 20), when he says that Spinoza makes "de l'ex  g  se de la Bible dans le Tractatus theologico-politicus une introduction au spiritualisme de l'  thique" [of the critical exegesis of the Bible in the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* an introduction to the spiritualism of the *Ethics*].

Since there are considerable differences among these four presentations, one must pose to oneself the question of which presentation is to be regarded as the most authentic or authoritative.

As has been shown elsewhere,¹¹ on the path from the *Elements* to the English *Leviathan* Hobbes underwent, to a certain extent, the development from Anglicanism to Independentism. In any case, on this path, from presentation to presentation, his distance from the religious tradition becomes greater and more visible. The English *Leviathan* contains the “most radical” presentation of Hobbes’s critique of religion. In this work, and in it alone, Hobbes openly professes that he is concerned with the dismantling, the “Analysis, or Resolution,” of the entire religious tradition.¹² The Latin version of this work is partly a very free translation of the English *Leviathan*, in which the text is considerably—about a third—abridged, in the process, however, leaving the structure of the whole complete and the structure of the individual chapters, in most cases, unchanged.¹³ Numerous inessential changes can be explained by the fact that the English version is principally addressed to the unlearned, the Latin by contrast to the learned; more noteworthy, even if not important for knowledge of Hobbes’s principles, are the deviations occasioned by the transformation of the political situation: the English version appeared under parliamentary rule, the Latin appeared after the Restoration.¹⁴ In particular, the changes in the parts of *Leviathan* [devoted to] the critique of religion that Hobbes occasionally made in the Latin edition are to be understood as concessions to the then current regime. The decisive profession of Independentism in the English *Leviathan* is replaced by an equally decisive rejection of the entire English Revolution.¹⁵ The sharp and extensive critique of the Roman Church, which fills the entire fourth part of *Leviathan*—it is entitled “The Kingdome of Darknesse”—is now supposed to have as its exclusive purpose the defense of the Church of England.¹⁶ With this in mind, Hobbes partly struck out and partly tempered a

11. See Strauss, *Political Philosophy of Hobbes* [74 and context].

12. *Leviathan*, chap. 47 (479f.).

13. Hobbes made the considerable changes—besides replacing the “Review and Conclusion” with a completely newly written “Appendix”—in chapters 46 and 47.

14. Compare, in this connection, Ferdinand Tönnies, *Hobbes: Leben und Lehre* (Stuttgart: Frommann, 1896), 248; J. Lips, *Die Stellung des Thomas Hobbes zu den politischen Parteien der grossen englischen Revolution* (Leipzig, 1927), 75–82; Z. Lubieński, *Die Grundlagen des ethisch-politischen Systems von Hobbes* (Munich, 1932), 253–74.

15. Cf. *Opera Latina*, 3:508–10 [Latin version of *Leviathan*] with *Leviathan*, chap. 47 (479f.).

16. *Opera Latina*, 3:508.

very great number of passages containing reservations against the church.¹⁷ He thus attempted to fulfill the promise contained in the explanation, openly opposed to the truth, given to Charles II in the year 1662: "There is nothing in it [i.e., in the *Leviathan*] against Episcopacy."¹⁸ A more exact comparison of the Latin version with the English leads to the conclusion that there can be no question of Hobbes's turning back to the more measured statements of his earlier writings: apart from a slight tempering of the form, in its essence, the Latin version adheres throughout to those teachings by which the English *Leviathan* is characteristically distinguished from *De cive* and the *Elements*. In the appendix to the Latin *Leviathan*, Hobbes does indeed retract the most offensive heresies of the English version; but even the least mistrustful reader recognizes at once that the retractions are not meant in earnest.¹⁹ Hobbes's last word in matters of the critique of religion is therefore not to be sought in the Latin but in the English version of *Leviathan*. Since the English *Leviathan*, moreover, contains the most extensive and most complete presentation of Hobbes's critique of religion, it ranks as the authoritative presentation.

Even though the English *Leviathan* contains the frankest presentation of the Hobbesian critique of religion, this is not to say that in that work Hobbes sets forth his actual view undisguisedly.²⁰ Hobbes generally proceeds by beginning with fully or mostly orthodox-sounding statements, in order to lead these statements afterward, in a more or less veiled manner, *ad absurdum*. In the further course of the investigation, however, he often makes no explicit use of the results of his critique, but rather avails himself of

17. Thus in the Latin version he removed in particular an "explanation" of the Trinity equivalent to its denial. See *Leviathan*, chap. 16 (114) and 42 (339f.).

18. *English Works*, ed. William Molesworth (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1839-45), 7:5 [epistle dedicatory to *Seven Philosophical Problems and Two Propositions of Geometry*]. Cf. also the statement (likewise written after the Restoration) in support of the Episcopal church order in *English Works*, 4:364 [*An Answer to Bishop Bramhall's Book, called "The Catching of the Leviathan"*] and 407 and *Opera Latina*, 1:xvi [*An Historical Narration Concerning Heresy, and the Punishment Thereof*]. Cf., on the other hand, *Behemoth*, ed. Ferdinand Tönnies (London: Simpkin, Marshall, 1889), reprinted with a new introduction by Stephen Holmes (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 56f.

19. Lubieński himself, who, incidentally, finds "generally . . . in Hobbes a pronounced attachment to the Christian religion and a great respect for the Holy Scriptures" (217), admits (*ibid.*, 212) this about the retraction of the "explanation" of the Trinity in *Opera Latina*, 3:563f.

20. Aubrey says: Hobbes "told me he [sc. Spinoza's *Tractatus-theologico-politicus*] had cut through him a barren's length, for he durst not write so boldly" (*Brief Lives*, ed. Andrew Clark [Oxford, 1898], 1:357). His statement compels one to consider in the first place whether even the boldest remarks found in Hobbes's *writings* approximate sufficiently his actual view.

the previously rejected opinions, as though they were self-evidently correct, in order to refute other traditional teachings covertly.²¹ In order to get to know his actual view, one must therefore attempt to collect, as Hobbes no doubt intentionally neglected to do, the results of his critique, which are strewn among many passages of the work. This depends not so much on the completeness of the collection or even on the selection of the most offensive heresies as such as on connecting the central thoughts in the critique of religion.

In order to protect our interpretation against every danger and suspicion of being arbitrary, we proceed, however, not from the overall impression indicated many times by the tendency of Hobbes's critique of religion, but from the assumption that Hobbes was a believing Christian. We accept, therefore, what in truth is the façade of his critique of religion—meant to conceal the interior from the eyes of dangerous and endangered readers—as his sincere opinion. We presume, therefore, that his critique of revelation is not so much a critique of revelation itself as a critique, carried out on the ground of belief in revelation, of the theologians' opinions *about* revelation. Consequently, we investigate in the first place his *critique of the tradition on the basis of Scripture* and only afterward his *critique of Scripture itself*; in other words, we first treat his ostensible, and only afterwards his real, opinion about revelation.

THE CRITIQUE OF THE TRADITION

a. The Principle of Scripture

At first glance, Hobbes's critique of *religion* presents itself as a critique simply of *theology*. Hobbes wants to achieve the liberation of philosophy from ecclesiastical tutelage, the liberation of men *for* philosophy, not through the destruction of religion but through the pure *separation* of religion and philosophy: Religion is *not* philosophy, but law;²² the declarations of religion about God do *not* have "the signification of Philosophicall Truth, *but* the signification of Pious intention."²³ Now theology, which one must not

21. Since Hobbes thus advances claims consistent with the tradition with relative frequency, he does not find it difficult, when being attacked because of his dangerous teachings, to appeal to precisely these claims. A series of examples to this effect are found in his countercritique of Bishop Bramhall's critique of *Leviathan*; see, for example, *English Works*, 4:361.

22. *De homine* 14.4. [*Opera Latina*, 2:119–20.]

23. *Leviathan*, chap. 31 (252) and chap. 12 (77–78). Spinoza has the same position; cf. *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, ed. C. H. Bruder (Leipzig: B. Tauchnitz, 1843), 14 (20, 33, 38) and 15 (2).

therefore confuse with religion, as commonly happens,²⁴ rests precisely on the mixture of philosophy and religion;²⁵ it is the simultaneously comic and gruesome result of the nonsensical attempt to reconcile biblical simplicity with Greek speculation. And it is to be combated not solely because it has reduced philosophy to its handmaiden, whereas religion has in no way interfered with the freedom of philosophy,²⁶ but also and above all because it, and not so much religion, is the originator of the wars of religion.²⁷ Hobbes goes further: he purports to lead the struggle against theology, not only in the interest of philosophy and civil peace, but equally in the interest of religion, of piety. He thus combats the philosophy underlying theology not only because it is bad philosophy but also because it is unchristian, pagan.²⁸ Theology taints even and precisely that religion, the *sincera religio Christi*, which is a simple guide to the right life and to holiness, and which has absolutely nothing to do with scholastic quibbles.²⁹ To the arbitrary, private opinions of the theologians who concern themselves, suitably, with questions "to trouble us in the performance of Gods commands,"³⁰ Hobbes opposes the binding teaching of Scripture and the church.³¹ And since the church is also exposed to spiritual errors,³² he appeals, not merely from theology, but also from the church, to Scripture *alone*.

Hobbes turns, therefore, from the tradition to an authority acknowledged by the tradition itself as unconditionally binding. He explicitly adopts the ultimate presuppositions of the tradition as indisputably self-evident.³³ Thus, the belief in the existence and truthfulness of God is self-evident for him;³⁴ and it is also self-evident for him that one must obey God's commandments more than the commandments of man. What is questionable is "only" how one can know whether a certain command really, or only al-

24. *Behemoth*, 57.

25. *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (463).

26. Cf. *Leviathan*, chap. 45 (444) and chap. 46 (463).

27. *De corpore*, epistola dedicatoria.

28. *English Works*, 4:426f. and *Leviathan*, Review (491). In justifying this rejection of scholastic theology carried out in the interest of the belief in Scripture, Hobbes appeals explicitly to Luther, Melancthon, and Calvin; see *English Works*, 5:64f.

29. Cf., above all, the beginning and the end of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* (*Opera Latina*, 5:349 and 408), as well as *English Works*, 4:338.

30. *Leviathan*, chap. 45 (444).

31. Cf. *Opera Latina*, 3:569 and 508.

32. *Leviathan*, chap. 44 (417f.). Cf. also *English Works*, 4:338.

33. Cf. *Behemoth*, 63.

34. *De cive* 16.4.

legedly, originates from God.³⁵ That Scripture is the Word of God, however, is self-evident.³⁶ It follows from this that something can be commanded by God only if it is consistent with Scripture. What criterion is there, however, for judging such statements that allegedly rest on divine authority and that do not indeed oppose the teaching of Scripture, but that still cannot be derived from Scripture itself? Commands of this kind could be certified as divine only by miracles; today, however, there are no more miracles; therefore, for today's Christian, Scripture is not only the primary but even the sole source for knowledge of the commands of God.³⁷

The problem of the tradition, set to the side by pointing to the cessation of miracles, recurs at once. The books of Scripture are composed in foreign languages; one therefore needs a translator and an explicator.³⁸ Who, in case of doubt, should decide which translation and explication ranks as authentic? Who should decide beforehand which books are canonical? It is not enough to respond, the church. For after the division of the church, this answer entails the question, *Which* church? Hobbes answers, the Church of England. But this answer already presupposes the result of the investigation into church politics. For Hobbes submits to the Church of England simply because it is set up as his spiritual authority by that temporal power to which he, as a subject, is obligated in unconditional obedience.³⁹ Now, the presupposition that one must obey the temporal power unconditionally, even in spiritual questions, cannot, by its essence, be secured on the basis of the reasonable principles of temporal politics, but only on the basis of the revealed principles of Christian politics;⁴⁰ the result of the investigation of Scripture, therefore, is presupposed; it cannot be established, prior to the investigation of Scripture, that the Church of England's conception of Scripture should rank as binding. Hobbes, unconcerned with any authorities, and in accordance with his own rational standard, ascertains the teaching of Scripture by deciding which books are canonical, or rather, which translation and explication reproduce the genuine view of Scripture. That this is the case, he himself confirms by openly explaining, on a number of occasions, that the

35. *Leviathan*, chap. 33 (260) and chap. 43 (403).

36. *Leviathan*, chap. 33 (267f.).

37. *Leviathan*, chap. 32 (268f.), and *English Works*, 4:326f.

38. *De cive* 17.17f.

39. "with submission . . . both in this, and in all questions, whereof the determination dependeth on the Scriptures, to the interpretation of the Bible authorized by the Common-wealth, whose Subject I am." *Leviathan*, chap. 38 (307).

40. *Leviathan*, chap. 32, beginning, chap. 34, beginning, and chap. 43, end.

interpretations advanced by him are not the usual ones, even though he naturally does not fail to submit to the somewhat different view of the Church of England, i.e., to the temporal power.⁴¹

Hobbes appeals, therefore, from the tradition to Scripture, which he interprets solely according to his own rational standard, and thus, in this respect, just like any other literary document. There are, however, peculiar principles of interpretation resulting from presupposing the revealed character of Scripture that can have no application to the interpretation of other books. Scripture is neither a vulgar nor a scientific book; hence, the meaning of the words used in Scripture can be ascertained neither from the vulgar nor from the scientific use of speech, but solely from Scripture itself.⁴² The advancement of this principle in Hobbes has as its ground, not the interest of a "presuppositionless," historically faithful knowledge of the meaning of the Bible,⁴³ but the demand, resting on the belief in the revealed character of Scripture, to validate the pure word of God against all human falsifications and fabrications (or rather, the intention to use this demand as a pretext for committing theological opponents to what is to them the inconvenient literal meaning of Scripture). The principle of unconditional submission to the literal meaning of Scripture is at first glance called into question by the thesis, likewise derived from the revealed character of Scripture, that no conflict can occur between Scripture, which is revealed by God, and human reason, which is created by God. But for Hobbes, it in no way follows from this thesis that in the case of an (apparent) contradiction between reason and revelation, Scripture should be interpreted in terms of reason. Scripture is indeed not contrarational, but suprarational; and as a rule there is no other reason for the claim that a passage in Scripture is contrarational in its literal meaning than the deficient willingness of the reader to surrender his understanding to the obedience of belief.⁴⁴ The submission to the literal meaning of Scripture is all the more necessary in that Scripture, as follows from the

41. *Leviathan*, chap. 38 (307 and 311) and Review (489); cf. also *Opera Latina*, 3:517 and 528.

42. "the . . . Signification of words . . . in the Doctrine following, dependeth not (as in naturall science) on the Will of the Writer, nor (as in common conversation) on vulgar use, but on the sense they carry in the Scripture." *Leviathan*, chap. 34, beginning.

43. As is the case in Spinoza; cf. Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, 122ff. and 262ff.

44. "though there be many things in Gods Word above Reason; that is to say, which cannot by naturall reason be either demonstrated, or confuted; yet there is nothing contrary to it; but when it seemeth so, the fault is either in unskilfull Interpretation, or erroneous Ratiocination. Therefore, when any thing therein written is too hard for our examination, wee are bidden to

investigation of Scripture itself, wants to teach nothing about the subjects of the sciences;⁴⁵ it would, therefore, be completely inappropriate to want to reinterpret Scriptural passages that are not even somewhat in harmony with scientific principles in accordance with those principles.⁴⁶ It is different if there is an (apparent) contradiction *within* Scripture; in this case, both, or at least one, of the texts contradicting each other must be interpreted in such a way that the contradiction, or rather the appearance of the contradiction, vanishes.⁴⁷

The interpreter must therefore submit fundamentally, if not even unconditionally, to the literal meaning of Scripture. To the literal meaning of Scripture—this does *not* mean to the meaning of isolated and, in addition, perhaps also dark and ambiguous passages. Rather, he must direct his focus to the leading intention of Scripture as a *whole*, and he must unambiguously account for this intention out of the *clear* passages;⁴⁸ out of these passages he can attempt to advance to an understanding also of the darker passages,⁴⁹ if he does not want—which, ultimately, is more proper—to leave the meaning of these passages alone in order to lead a Christian life under the guidance of those clear passages that accord with the meaning of Scripture as a whole. For, as to that purpose, Scripture is doubtlessly sufficient.⁵⁰

captivate our understanding to the Words." *Leviathan*, chap. 32 (256). Cf. also chap. 34 (270 and 278).

45. *Leviathan*, chap. 45 (444).

46. Cf., however, the remark: "those texts that seem to countenance the power of Magick, Witchcraft, and Enchantment, must needs have another sense than at first sight [they] seem to bear," which relies on the fact that magic and the like are impossible. *Leviathan*, chap. 37 (304).

47. "You see how great the apparent contradiction is between the . . . texts, which being both Scripture, may and must be reconciled and made to stand together; which unless the rigour of the letter be on one or both sides with intelligible and reasonable interpretations mollified, is impossible." *English Works*, 5:10. Spinoza explicitly rejects this principle of exegesis, which was known to him through the Jewish tradition (see *Tractatus theologico-politicus* 15, §§4ff. ed. Bruder), and proceeds in Hobbes's own terms more radically than Hobbes himself.

48. "in the allegation of Scripture, I have endeavoured to avoid such texts as are of obscure, or controverted Interpretation; and to alledge none, but in such sense as is most plain, and agreeable to the harmony and scope of the whole Bible . . . For it is not the bare Words, but the Scope of the writer that giveth the true light, by which *any* writing is to bee interpreted." *Leviathan*, chap. 43, end. Cf. moreover chap. 43 (407 and 408), chap. 44 (425 and 438–39), and Review (390).

49. Cf. for example the exegesis of 1 Cor. 3:11–12 in chap. 43 (410), in which Hobbes explicitly interprets the difficult part of the passage according to the exegesis of the clear and readily understood part.

50. Cf. *Behemoth*, 55.

b. Spirits and Angels

Hobbes begins to ascertain the teaching of Scripture with the investigation of the meaning that the word *spirit* has in Scripture. The investigation leads to the following result: The biblical word that is ordinarily translated as "spirit" means in Scripture, when used in its actual sense, either a real, i.e., a corporeal substance of particular subtlety (air, wind, vital spirits, or the like), or an image that the imagination produces in dreams or visions; it never means "spirit or incorporeal substance." The claim that there are spirits therefore has no basis in Scripture. In particular, Scripture teaches nothing about how a man can be possessed by a spirit, unless it is by his own vital spirit, by which his body is naturally moved.⁵¹ In fundamentally the same way, the word *angel* in Scripture means body—whether meant more subtly or more crudely (e.g., men)⁵²—or phantasms, insofar as God avails himself of these bodies or phantasms in order to announce his presence or his commands to men; "angels" are principally phantasms that have been brought forth in a supernatural manner. A series of passages in the New Testament certainly extorts from feeble reason the belief that angels exist as substances of a particular kind, naturally as corporeal substances of a particular kind.⁵³

51. *Leviathan*, chap. 45 (442f.)

52. "Nor in the New Testament is there any place, out of which it can be proved, that Angels (except when they are put for such men, as God hath made the Messengers, and Ministers of his word, or works) are things permanent, and withall incorporeall." *Leviathan*, chap. 34 (277).

53. "Concerning the creation of Angels, there is nothing delivered in the Scriptures. That they are Spirits, is often repeated: but by the name of Spirit, is signified both in Scripture, and vulgarly, both amongst Jews, and Gentiles, sometimes thin Bodies; as the Aire, the Wind, the Spirits Vitall, and Animall, of living creatures; and sometimes the Images that rise in the fancy of Dreams, and Visions; which are not reall Substances, nor last any longer than the Dream, or Vision they appear in; which Apparitions, though no reall Substances, but Accidents of the brain; yet when God raiseth them supernaturally, to signifie his Will, they are not improperly termed Gods Messengers, that is to say, his Angels." *Leviathan*, chap. 34 (274–75). "By the name of Angel, is signified . . . most often, a Messenger of God: And by a Messenger of God, is signified, any thing that makes known his extraordinary Presence; that is to say, the extraordinary manifestation of his power, especially by a Dream, or Vision." Ibid. "Considering therefore the signification of the word Angel in the Old Testament, and the nature of Dreams and Visions that happen to men by the ordinary way of Nature; I was inclined to this opinion, that Angels were nothing but supernaturall apparitions of the Fancy, raised by the speciall and extraordinary operation of God, thereby to make his presence and commandements known to mankind. . . . But the many places of the New Testament, and our Saviours own words, and in such texts, wherein is no suspicion of corruption of the Scripture, have extorted from my feeble Reason, an acknowledgment and beleef, that there be also Angels substantiall, and permanent. But to beleieve they be . . . Incorporeal, cannot by Scripture bee evinced." Ibid. (278). Cf. also *De cive* 17.28.

Whereas Scripture compels one to acknowledge the existence of angels, the belief in devils is contrary to the teaching of Scripture.⁵⁴

The result of the introductory and foundational investigation of Scripture can be summed up as follows: (1) The critique that consummates this investigation is directed emphatically against spiritualism; appealing to Scripture, Hobbes combats the dualism of corporeal and incorporeal substances within creation;⁵⁵ he accepts only the one universe of corporeal substances—apart from these, there is nothing but the world of human imaginings. (2) The denial of the incorporeal in no way means the denial of the supernatural: there are indeed no spirits, but there are miracles and, in particular, phantasms brought forth in a supernatural manner. And besides, the denial of the incorporeal does not mean that there are not corporeal beings whose existence and essence are inaccessible to reason: submitting reason to Scripture, maintaining the principle that while Scripture does not contain a contrarational teaching, it does indeed contain a suprarational teaching, Hobbes acknowledges that there are angels. (3) He does, though, deny the existence of the devil. This denial shows that the struggle against spiritualism is not the only goal of his critique of the tradition; for if he were merely concerned with the critique of spiritualism, one would not see why his teaching regarding the devil is different from that regarding angels, or in other words, why he contests not only the incorporeality but even the existence of the devil. The reason for this deviation is easy to figure out: Hobbes is concerned not solely with the struggle against the belief in spirits but also, in particular, with the struggle against the belief in evil superhuman powers.

c. The Kingdom of God and Eternal Life

Hobbes construes the expressions “eternal life” and “eternal death,” and therewith all salvational history, in accordance with his foundational critique of spiritualism. He does not disguise the fact that he thereby stands in

54. “[The] significant names, Satan, Devill, Abaddon, set not forth to us any Individuall person, as proper names use to doe; but onely an office, or quality; and are therefore Appellatives; which ought not to have been left untranslated, as they are in the Latine and Modern Bibles; because thereby they seem to be proper names of Daemons; and men are the more easily seduced to beleieve the doctrine of Devills; which at that time was the Religion of the Gentiles, and contrary to that of Moses, and of Christ.” *Leviathan*, chap. 38 (314). Cf. also *English Works*, 4:356f. and 5:210f.

55. Hobbes says explicitly in *Leviathan*, chap. 34 (271), that the result of the investigation regarding the meaning that the word “spirit” has in Scripture does not apply to those passages in which it means that *God* is a spirit.

open opposition to the tradition. But whereas he shows no hesitation whatsoever in contradicting the tradition in his foundational investigation of the meaning of the word *spirit*, in his discussion of the doctrine of eternal life he does not tire of giving the assurance that the explanation advanced is only his private opinion, which, as such, he subordinates to the rather different decree of the ecclesiastical authority.⁵⁶ Only in its application to man does the meaning, and hence the suspect character, of the critique of spiritualism come to the fore, the critique that, taken in the abstract, does not at all preclude the existence—although as corporeal substances—of angels. In applying the principal critique of spiritualism to man, Hobbes comes close to unambiguously heretical doctrines; even in this context, and even, therefore, before any discrediting of the authority of Scripture, he is compelled to conceal his view.

Man was created for immortality, for eternal life on *earth*. Through Adam's disobeying God's commandment, man has lost this immortality, and through Jesus Christ's salvational act, all who believe in Jesus as the Christ regain this immortality—eternal life on *earth*, not in heaven.⁵⁷ Accordingly, what is to be understood as the "Kingdom of God" is not, as the theologians ordinarily claim, "Eternall felicity, after this life, in the Highest Heaven," or an unearthly, supernal bliss, but "a Kingdome properly so named," which comes about through God's making a contract with men of such a kind that the men in question promise obedience to the commandments of God, while God promises these men an *earthly* reward for their obedience. God thus promised Adam eternal life on earth, the Patriarchs and the Israelites under Moses possession of the land of Canaan, and the elect, who believe in Jesus as the Christ, in turn eternal life on earth.⁵⁸ Now, because the covenant made with Adam became instantly null and void through Adam's disobedience, the

56. Cf. *Leviathan*, chap. 38 (307, 311, and 314).

57. "it seemeth to me, . . . that Adam if he had not sinned, had had an Eternall Life on Earth." *Leviathan*, chap. 38 (307). "For if as in Adam, all die, that is, have forfeited Paradise, and Eternall Life on Earth, even so in Christ all shall bee made alive; then all men shall be made to live on Earth; for else the comparison were not proper." Ibid. (308). "That the place wherein men are to live Eternally, after the Resurrection, is the Heavens . . . is not easily to be drawn from any text that I can find." Ibid. (309).

58. "I find the Kingdome of God, to signifie in most places of Scripture, a Kingdome properly so named, constituted by the Votes of the People of Israel in peculiar manner; wherein they chose God for their King by Covenant made with him, upon Gods promising them the possession of the land of Canaan." *Leviathan*, chap. 35 (280). Regarding Abraham, see *ibid.*, as well as *Leviathan*, chap. 40, beginning; regarding Adam and the Christian promise, see the previous note.

history of the kingdom of God actually begins first with Abraham, or rather first with Moses.⁵⁹ The kingdom of God, which takes its beginning from the contract at Sinai, is a real, civil commonwealth in which God rules on *earth* by means of his earthly lieutenants (first Moses, then the high priest), and the purpose of which is the proper earthly purpose of all commonwealths and, in addition, the particular earthly reward likewise promised by God.⁶⁰ This kingdom of God comes to an end with the rebellion of the Israelites against it and the election of Saul. But God promises, through the prophets, that this, his kingdom, will be restored through Christ: this kingdom, beginning with the second coming of Christ, is also an *earthly* kingdom;⁶¹ Christ will govern in his *human* nature,⁶² and he himself will not be actually king but rather a subordinate lieutenant to God the King, just as Moses and the high priests were lieutenants to God the King.⁶³ And as "salvation" in Scripture altogether means deliverance from temporal, *earthly* enemies, so the general salvation with which the kingdom of God will ultimately begin is a salvation through triumph, therefore through victory, and therefore through battle, "which cannot well be supposed, shall be in heaven," a deliverance on earth from earthly enemies of the earthly kingdom of God.⁶⁴

But at his second coming Christ not only has the office of wielding the kingship of God in the name of God, and therefore the task of restoring the earthly kingdom of God that had been destroyed through the election of Saul; it behooves him at the same time to restore mankind to its original

59. Cf. *De cive* 16.2; *Leviathan*, chap. 35 (281) and chap. 40, beginning.

60. "by the Kingdome of God, is properly meant a Common-wealth, instituted . . . for their Civill Government, and the regulating of their behaviour, not onely towards other Nations both in peace and warre; which properly was a Kingdome, wherein God was King, and the High priest was to be (after the death of Moses) his sole Viceroy, or Lieutenant." *Leviathan*, chap. 35 (282). "The Kingdome . . . of God, is a reall, not a metaphoricall Kingdome." *Ibid.* (283). Cf. also n. 58 above.

61. "In short, the Kingdome of God is a Civill Kingdome; . . . which Kingdome having been cast off, in the election of Saul, the Prophets foretold, should be restored by Christ; and the Restauration whereof we daily pray for, when we say in the Lords Prayer, Thy Kingdome come . . . the Kingdome of God (called also the Kingdome of Heaven, from the gloriousnesse, and admirable height of that throne) [is] a Kingdome which God by his Lieutenants, or Vicars, who deliver his Commandements to the people, did exercise on Earth." *Leviathan*, chap. 35 (284).

62. "it is evident, that our Saviours Kingdome is to bee exercised by him in his humane nature." *Leviathan*, chap. 41 (336).

63. "Seeing therefore the authority of Moses was but subordinate, and hee but a Lieutenant to God; it followeth, that Christ, whose authority, as man, was to bee like that of Moses, was no more but subordinate to the authority of his Father." *Leviathan*, chap. 41 (338). Cf. also *Leviathan*, chap. 41, beginning and end.

64. *Leviathan*, chap. 38 (316f.).

state forfeited by Adam's sin.⁶⁵ His death upon the cross, expiating the sin of Adam (and of all men in Adam), is the condition for the salvation of mankind. The consequences of sin are death and misery; the deliverance from sin must therefore entail the deliverance from death and misery. In fact, in Scripture, forgiveness of sin and salvation from death and misery are identical. The salvation that the elect will be granted at the end of days, absolute salvation, is therefore salvation from all *earthly* evils and the restoration of complete *earthly* happiness, of an earthly life without want and death.⁶⁶

The sin of Adam and the salvational act of Christ correspond to each other also in *this* respect; that just as the sin of Adam had only the condemnation to death, not death itself, as an immediate consequence, redemption too has only absolution from death, not eternal life, as an immediate consequence. Eternal life begins only with the resurrection of the dead on the Day of Judgment.⁶⁷ But where do the *souls* of the departed reside until the Day of Judgment? One must here respond that Scripture nowhere at all teaches that man's soul is immortal, that it can exist independent of the body; "soul" and "life" are identical for Scripture; the word *soul* means in Scripture "living body," never an incorporeal substance. One can therefore speak only of the immortality of *man* as a living body. It is precisely for this reason that immortality does not belong to the nature of man; it comes to him, rather, only through the free will, the grace, the promise of God: man is by nature mortal; he was created mortal, and he obtains immortality only through the fulfillment of a condition, namely, in the event of his obedience or his belief. When man dies, nothing other than his corpse remains; there is no life between natural death and the miraculous resurrection. God,

65. *Leviathan*, chap. 41, beginning.

66. "The joyes of life Eternall, are in Scripture comprehended all under the name of *Salvation*, or being saved. To be saved, is to be secured, either respectively, against speciall Evills, or absolutely, against all Evill, comprehending Want, Sicknesse, and Death it self . . . to be saved from Sin, is to be saved from all the Evill and Calamities that Sinne hath brought upon us. And therefore in the Holy Scripture, Remission of Sinne, and Salvation from Death and Misery, is the same thing . . . And it is besides evident in reason, that since Death and Misery, were the punishments of Sin, the discharge of Sinne, must also be a discharge of Death and Misery; that is to say, Salvation absolute, such as the faithfull are to enjoy after the day of Judgment, by the power and favour of Jesus Christ, who for that cause is called our Saviour." *Leviathan* chap. 38 (315f.).

67. "The comparison between that Eternall Life which Adam lost, and our Saviour by his Victory over death hath recovered; holdeth also in this, that as Adam lost Eternal Life by his sin, and yet lived after it for a time; so the faithful Christian hath recovered Eternal Life by Christs passion, though he die a natural death, and remaine dead for a time; namely, till the Resurrection." *Leviathan*, chap. 38 (309).

who had the power to form man out of inanimate matter, can also restore man's corpse to an immortal, spiritual matter, thus raising man to an angelic condition.⁶⁸

As the kingdom of God and eternal life have their place on earth, so too do hell and eternal death. The indications in Scripture about hell are all either indeterminate or metaphorical.⁶⁹ In order to ascertain the real facts, which are circumscribed by metaphors, Hobbes deems it necessary to investigate what Scripture teaches about the nature of biblical torment and the tormentors. As for the tormentors, the "enemy" or "Satan," he and his kingdom are on earth: by "Satan" is to be understood nothing other than some *earthly* enemy of the kingdom of God, just as in the time before the election of Saul, when the kingdom of God was in Palestine, and the kingdoms of the enemy were the peoples all around.⁷⁰ But in what, then, does the torment

68. "our Saviour intended to prove, . . . the Resurrection of the Body, that is to say, the Immortality of the Man [i.e., and not the Immortality of the Soul]. Therefore our Saviour meaneth, that [the] Patriarchs were Immortall; not by a property consequent to the essence, and nature of mankind; but by the will of God, that was pleased of his mere grace, to bestow Eternall life upon the faithfull . . . That the soul of man is in its own nature eternall, and a living Creature independent of the body; or that any meer man is Immortall, otherwise than by the Resurrection in the last day, (except Enos and Elias) is a doctrine not apparent in Scripture. The whole 14. Chapter of Job . . . is a complaint of this Mortality of Nature; and yet no contradiction of the Immortality at the Resurrection . . . the Immortall Life (and Soule and Life in the Scripture, do usually signifie the same thing) . . . hath for cause, not his specificall nature, and generation; but the Promise." *Leviathan*, chap. 38 (310 f.). "we read plainly in holy Scripture, that God created Adam in an estate of Living for Ever; which was conditionall, that is to say, if he disobeyed not his Commandement; which was not essentiall to Human Nature." *Leviathan*, chap. 44 (424). "The Soule in Scripture, signifieth alwaies, either the Life, or the Living Creature; and the Body and Soule jointly, the Body alive." Ibid. (425). "The Elect are . . . the sole heirs of Eternall Life: they only can die no more: it is they that are equall to the Angels." Ibid. (433). "God, that could give life to a peece of clay, hath the same power to give life again to a dead man, and renew his inanimate, and rotten Carkasse, into a glorious, spirituall, and immortall Body." Ibid. (436). Cf. moreover *Leviathan*, Latin Appendix, chap. 1 (*Opera Latina*, 3:520–27), as well as *English Works*, 4:350–54.

69. "As the Kingdome of God, and Eternal Life, so also Gods Enemies, and their Torments after Judgment, appear by the Scripture, to have their place on Earth . . . for the place of the damned after the Resurrection, it is not determined, neither in the Old, nor New Testament, by any note of situation." *Leviathan*, chap. 38 (311). "that which is thus [i.e., in the Scripture] said concerning Hell Fire, is spoken metaphorically." Ibid. (314). Cf. also *Opera Latina*, 3:518.

70. "if the Kingdome of God after the Resurrection, bee upon the Earth, . . . The Enemy, and his Kingdome must be on Earth also. For so also was it, in the time before the Jews had deposed God. For Gods Kingdome was in Palestine; and the Nations round about, were the Kingdomes of the Enemy; and consequently by Satan, is meant any Earthly Enemy of the Church." *Leviathan*, chap. 38 (314).

of hell consist? From Hobbes's convoluted explanations, all that emerges is that he denies the eternity of punishment in hell.⁷¹ Only in a much later passage in *Leviathan* do we receive any clear information: just as the elect will live after the resurrection in spiritual bodies without marrying, eating, and drinking, as well as without ever dying, so the damned will live after the resurrection in crude and corruptible bodies like the men alive now, and will consequently eat, drink, beget children, and then die yet again, the second death;⁷² the punishment of the damned consists in the "grief, and discontent of mind, from the sight of that Eternal felicity in others, which they themselves through their own incredulity, and disobedience have lost."⁷³ But since the damned surely die again after the resurrection, this suffering is only finite.

We sum up again: (1) Because there are no spirits, no incorporeal substances, there are, in particular, also no human souls independent of the body, no souls immortal by their nature that would be capable of eternal happiness and eternal anguish; with the dualism of spirit and body, the dualism of heaven (or hell) and earth falls apart. (2) But as the negation of the dualism within created substances does not entail the negation of the dualism of God and creation, and therefore—in principle—miracles are possible, so too there may indeed be no spirits, but there are particular, miraculous works of God, and there may be no kingdom of God as a realm of spirits, but there is a kingdom of God, which God has established in miraculous ways as a dominion over a particular group of men; and as the fact that there are no spirits does not preclude corporeal angels, so the fact that there is no immortality of the soul does not preclude a resurrection of the body, a second earthly life in miraculous, spiritual bodies. That these possibilities—angels, eternal life, God's particular providence, miracles—have really come into be-

71. "though there be many places that affirm Everlasting Fire, and Torments . . . yet I find none that affirm there shall bee an Eternall Life therein of any individuall person; but to the contrary, an Everlasting Death, which is the Second Death . . . Whereby it is evident, that there is to bee a Second Death of every one that shall bee condemned at the day of Judgement, after which hee shall die no more." *Leviathan*, chap. 38 (315).

72. "as the Elect after the Resurrection shall be restored to the estate, wherein Adam was before he had sinned; so the Reprobate shall be in the estate, that Adam, and his posterity were in after the sin committed." *Leviathan*, chap. 44 (432). "the wicked being left in the estate they were in after Adams sin, may at the Resurrection live as they did, marry, and give in marriage, and have grosse and corruptible bodies, as all mankind now have; and consequently may engender perpetually, after the Resurrection, as they did before: For there is no place of Scripture to the contrary." Ibid. (432f.).

73. *Leviathan*, chap. 38 (314).

ing, however, we cannot know through reason, but only through Scripture.⁷⁴
 (3) Even if there is an eternal happiness, there is no eternal agony, no hell.

d. Temporal and Spiritual Power

There are no immaterial substances, therefore no human souls independent of their bodies, therefore no eternal happiness in heaven and no eternal suffering in hell; rather, there are only corporeal substances, only earthly life, earthly happiness, and earthly suffering; there is, therefore, no dualism of a heavenly and an earthly state and thus of a spiritual and temporal power. The denial of the dualism of substances entails the denial of the dualism of powers.

It is not to be doubted that in denying incorporeal substances Hobbes meant to deal a deadly blow to the doctrine of the "spiritualists,"⁷⁵ i.e., to the adherents of the spiritual power independent of the state. But it is likewise not to be doubted that it was fully clear to Hobbes that the denial of spirits, taken by itself, would not suffice to secure the absolute unity of the civil power, that is, the absolute exclusion of a spiritual power. For since Hobbes has to carry out his critique of spiritualism on the basis of Scripture, he has to acknowledge the dualism of God and creation as Scripture understands it, and therefore the possibility of *miracles*. It is precisely for this reason that he acknowledges that a contradiction between the commands of God and the commands of the temporal power is possible. For if God can intervene in natural events through miracles in general, he can intervene miraculously in natural, human commonwealths in particular by miraculously, through revelation, giving men commands that in some circumstances contradict the commands of the human sovereign,⁷⁶ even if they do not have the deposition or killing of the human sovereign as their object. The unity of the civil power is therefore threatened just as much, indeed even more, by the possibility of miracles as by spiritualism.

But insofar as he did not openly want to renounce his belief in Scripture, Hobbes could not exclude this possibility. In these circumstances there remained no other choice for him than either to show that God never makes

74. Cf. *De cive* 17.13 and 17.28.

75. *Leviathan*, chap. 39 (322).

76. "they who have no supernaturall Revelation to the contrary, ought to obey the laws of their own Sovereign." *Leviathan*, chap. 40 (323). "God is the Sovereign of all Sovereigns; and therefore, when he speaks to any Subject, he ought to obeyed, whatsoever any earthly Potentate command to the contrary." *Leviathan*, chap. 33 (260).

use of his miraculous power in a manner harmful to the absolute sovereignty of the temporal power, or in case God had in fact ever interfered with the prerogative of the human authority, to show that these precedents have no current significance. He had already developed the critique of spiritualism in accordance with this theoretical acknowledgment in principle, and specific practical disabling, of the belief in miracles. *On the one hand*, he was prevented from expressing the critique of spiritualism in its most radical, least ambiguous form by the compulsion to acknowledge the possibility of miracles: he had to content himself with denying the existence of spirits; he could not deny the existence of spiritual bodies; in other words, he had to replace spirits with beings with miraculous bodies. Accordingly, he could indeed teach that the kingdom of God was not a realm of spirits but an earthly commonwealth, but he had to admit not only that God governs over beings with natural, perishable bodies (as in the Old Covenant) but that God's reign is, or rather will be, over beings with miraculous, imperishable bodies as well. *On the other hand*, however, through this (theoretically so unsatisfying) "correction" of the traditional view, Hobbes achieved *almost* everything he needed for his practical purpose, the securing of absolute unity for the civil power. For if there are no incorporeal substances, and there is, therefore, no soul independent of the body, God can govern only over corporeal beings, and his kingdom must be an earthly kingdom. Now God governs either over men with natural bodies, as in the time of the Old Covenant (and this kingdom of God has been destroyed since the election of Saul) or over men with miraculous bodies (and this kingdom of God begins only with the resurrection of the dead). There is in the present age of the world, therefore, no kingdom of God, no authority other than the temporal, the human. The miraculous kingdom of God has no current significance at all.⁷⁷

Through his critique of spiritualism, which does not call into question the possibility of miracles, Hobbes achieves *almost* everything he needs for his purpose, and therefore *not* everything. Because this critique does not exclude the possibility of miracles, it has holes in it that can be filled in only by a special investigation. From the possibility of miracles follows immediately the possibility that God can interfere in a miraculous manner in human commonwealths. This difficulty is not yet disposed of with the remark that the earthly kingdom of God has been destroyed with the election of Saul. For

77. Speaking, in particular, of the conduct of Samuel and David toward Saul, Hobbes says: "all these transactions are supernatural, and oblige not to imitation. Is there any priest now, that can set up in England, Scotland, or Ireland, another king by pretence of prophecy or religion?" *English Works*, 4:331.

even though this election was indeed later consented to by God, it originally occurred against God's will, and besides, because Saul disobeyed God's commandment, Saul's kingdom was replaced straightaway, through divine dispensation, by the kingdom of David. Is it not, therefore, according to God's revealed will that one obey the leaders appointed by God himself rather than the possessors of earthly power? Do not the earthly deputies of God have a higher authority than merely human powers? One cannot say that since the decline of the earthly kingdom of God and before the resurrection, this question has no current significance. For the believers live in expectation of the future kingdom of heaven, and this faithfully expected kingdom already casts its light or its shadows on the present. Let us, therefore, consult the history of the kingdom of God!

This history begins with Abraham. Even before he entered into the covenant with God, Abraham was the sovereign master of his family. He therefore owes his sovereignty, not to the covenant with God, but to a purely human relationship. This sovereignty, which was not created by the covenant with God, was also not modified by this covenant. For God enters into the covenant only with Abraham himself, he speaks only with Abraham himself; the subjects, just as before the covenant, must obey only the commandments of Abraham: even the commandments of God reach them only in the form of commandments of Abraham; they have no right to invoke God's will against Abraham.⁷⁸ The same goes for God's covenant with Isaac and Jacob.⁷⁹ Even the sovereignty of Moses did not rest on a commandment of God; it had, rather, a purely human origin: it rested on the consent of the people.⁸⁰ God's covenant with Moses established, not indeed an ordinary, but a priestly kingdom, which means, however, a kingdom that, after Moses' death, was to be hereditary in the family of the high priest.⁸¹ In Moses'

78. "In this Contract of God with Abraham, wee may observe . . . , that at the making of this Covenant, God spake onely to Abraham, and therefore contracted not with any of his family, or seed, otherwise then as their wills . . . were before the Contract involved in the will of Abraham; who was therefore supposed to have had a lawfull power, to make them perform all that he covenanted for them . . . they to whom God hath not spoken immediately, are to receive the positive commandements of God from their Sovereign; as the family and seed of Abraham their Father, [and] Lord, and Civill Sovereign. . . . God spake onely to Abraham; and it was he onely, that was able to know what God said, and to interpret the same to his family." *Leviathan*, chap. 40 (323f.).

79. *Ibid.* (324).

80. "[Moses'] authority . . . , as the authority of all other Princes, must be grounded on the Consent of the People, and their Promise to obey him." *Ibid.* (324).

81. "the Covenant constituteth a Sacerdotall Kingdome, that is to say, a Kingdome hereditary to Aaron . . . , after Moses should bee dead." *Ibid.* (325).

lifetime, all power—temporal as well as spiritual—was to be concentrated in the hands of Moses (thus, of the temporal sovereign); God spoke to the people only through Moses; no prophecy other than that legitimated by Moses was allowed.⁸² In like manner, after Moses' death, all power was concentrated in the hands of the high priest. This constitution remained in force until the election (permitted by God) of Saul; from this time on all power lay in the hands of the kings.⁸³ Thus, in all epochs of the Old Covenant, all power was concentrated in *one* man's hands,⁸⁴ and indeed, as has been shown, in the hands of a sovereign who owed his sovereignty, not to the miraculous interventions of God, but to purely human relationships.

This argument, however, still does not sufficiently secure the unity of the civil power. For even if all sovereignty was of human provenance in the time of the Old Covenant, the office of Christ certainly rests on direct, divine appointment. And since Christ was supposed to restore the kingdom of God that had been destroyed by the election of Saul, and since all power in that kingdom was concentrated in the hands of the high priest, it is to be expected that in the Christian age, there will be a priestly, spiritual power resting at last on direct divine appointment. Now, it has indeed been shown that the kingdom of Christ begins only with the general resurrection. But while he sojourned on earth, Christ already exercised an authority resting on divine appointment, and it is a question whether this authority is not the origin of a spiritual institution, the church, which is independent of the temporal power, and which may even be its superior. The investigation of Scripture, though, leads to the conclusion that Christ while he sojourned on earth did not interfere at all with the right of the temporal power: he left all princes in full possession of their lawful authority. He did no more than announce his kingdom of the last day and teach the conditions for entrance into this kingdom. Since, therefore, Christ had no kingly power in this world, his ministers have even less. And as Christ was not king on earth, but a teacher, his ministers cannot win obedience by coercion or punishment, but only by

82. "Moses alone had next under God the sovereignty over the Israelites: And that not onely in causes of Civill Policy, but also of Religion: For Moses onely spake with God, and therefore onely could tell the People, what it was that God required at their hands . . . There was no Prophet in the time of Moses, nor pretender to the Spirit of God, but such as Moses had approved and Authorized." Ibid. (326). Spinoza has the same position; see *Tractatus theologico-politicus* 18 (Bruder §§36–38).

83. *Leviathan*, chap. 40 (327ff.).

84. "we may conclude, that whosoever had the Sovereignty of the Common-wealth amongst the Jews, the same had also the Supreme Authority in matter of Gods externall worship; and represented Gods Person." Ibid. (331).

persuasion. Christ did not himself exercise a power to command, nor did he confer on his apostles and disciples any power to command, any authority over the community.⁸⁵ Since the members of the spirituality are essentially only teachers, they can indeed abandon their disciples, in case these refuse to be taught, but they cannot say that the disciples did them injustice, since these are not obligated to obey them.⁸⁶ And they do not even have this authorization to abandon their disciples with respect to their sovereign, who, as their master, can command of them what he wants.⁸⁷

A spiritual power—if by power is understood the authorization to command and to coerce—is therefore out of the question; the members of the spirituality essentially have only the authorization to teach. But is not this office of teaching at least independent of the temporal power? Only those teachers whom Christ himself had appointed were independent of the temporal power; in the following age all members of the spirituality owed their authority to teach to election by the community, by the church. In this election, even the apostles had only technical leadership; mainly they pronounced those officers who had been elected by the community elected.⁸⁸ The ecclesiastical officers have no rights at all belonging to them by virtue

85. "there are two parts of our Saviours Office during his aboad upon the Earth: one to Proclaim himself the Christ; and another by Teaching, and by working of Miracles, to perswade, and to prepare men to live so, as to be worthy of the Immortality Beleevers were to enjoy, at such time as he should come in majesty, to take possession of his Fathers Kingdome." *Leviathan*, chap. 41 (334f.). "the Kingdome of Christ is not of this world: therefore neither can his Ministers (unless they be Kings), require obedience in his name." *Leviathan*, chap. 42 (341). "It is therefore manifest, that Christ hath not left to his Ministers in this world, unlesse they be also endued with Civill Authority, any Authority to Command other men." *Ibid.* (343).

86. "the Power of Excommunication cannot be extended moreover than to the end for which the Apostles and Pastors of the Church have their Commission from our Saviour; which is not to rule by Command and Coaction, but by Teaching and Direction of men in the way of Salvation in the world to come. And as a master in any Science, may abandon his Scholar, when hee obstinately neglecteth the practise of his rules; but not accuse him of Injustice, because he was never bound to obey him: so a Teacher of Christian doctrine may abandon his Disciples that obstinately continue in an unchristian life; but he cannot say, they doe him wrong, because they are not obliged to obey him." *Leviathan*, chap. 42 (353).

87. *Ibid.* (352).

88. "the Apostles . . . were at first but twelve; and these were chosen and constituted by our Saviour himselfe." *Leviathan*, chap. 42 (363). "As the Apostles, Matthias, Paul, and Barnabas, were not made by our Saviour himself, but were elected by the Church, that is, by the Assembly of Christians; . . . so were also the Presbyters, and Pastors . . . elected by the Churches." *Ibid.* (355f.). "It was therefore the Assembly that elected their own Elders: the Apostles were onely Presidents of the Assembly to call them together for such Election, and to pronounce them Elected, and to give them the benediction, which now is called Consecration." *Ibid.* (366).

of divine appointment, and in particular no right to any earnings: as regards their livelihood, they are entirely dependent on their own wealth, their own work, and the voluntary gifts of pious and grateful Christians.⁸⁹ The members of the spirituality are nothing but the servants of the community. But does not the community have any authorizations independent of the state? Are not the rights of the temporal power in some way limited by the church, or at least with respect to the church? Since the temporal sovereigns were at the same time the spiritual shepherds of their peoples in pagan commonwealths, the Christian sovereigns must also be spiritual shepherds, i.e., be authorized to preach and to teach, as well as to appoint preachers and teachers at their will, Christ never having ordered that kings should lose any of their absolute power because of their belief in Christ; it depends in particular on their will whether they wish to confer the spiritual direction of their subjects on the pope or on a local church council of whatever sort; and the Christian sovereigns have not only the right to preach and to teach but also the right to perform all other church functions, i.e., to baptize, to administer the holy Communion, etc.⁹⁰ The unity of the civil power, therefore, does not experience the slightest restriction as a result of the fact that there is one church.

But what if the king is an unbeliever and nevertheless interferes in any way with the church, claiming for himself church functions or things of this sort? In principle, are there not any revealed commands of God that must be respected in all circumstances, that must therefore be obeyed in some circumstance in opposition to the command of the temporal power? If, in every commonwealth, all who have no revealed command to the contrary are obligated to obey the laws of the temporal power, the possibility remains that the men to whom a revelation has been given, that *prophets* under cer-

89. Ibid. (371).

90. "This Right of the Heathen Kings, cannot bee thought taken from them by their conversion to the Faith of Christ; who never ordained, that Kings for beleiving in him, should be deposed, that is, subjected to any but himselfe, . . . therefore Christian Kings are still the Supreme Pastors of their people, and have power to ordain what Pastors they please, to teach the Church." *Leviathan*, chap. 42 (372). "Christian Kings have power to Baptize, and to Consecrate." Ibid. (374). "If they please therefore, they may (as many Christian Kings now doe) commit the government of their Subjects in matters of Religion to the Pope; but then the Pope is in that point Subordinate to them, and exerciseth that Charge in anothers Dominion Jure Civili . . . , not Jure Divino . . . ; and may therefore be discharged of that Office, when the Sovereign for the good of his Subjects shall think it necessary. They may also if they please, commit the care of Religion to one Supreme Pastor, or to an Assembly of Pastors; and give them what power over the Church, or over one another, they think most convenient; and what titles of honor, as of Bishops, Archbishops, Priests, or Presbyters, they will." Ibid. (378).

tain circumstances, may contravene the laws of the temporal power, or may call for resistance to those laws. What criterion determines whether a man should rank as a prophet? How can a man to whom God has not proclaimed his will through revelation know that another who purports to preach God's word is a prophet? A prophet must fulfill two conditions: he must work miracles, and he may not teach anything that contradicts Scripture.⁹¹ In order to answer the question whether under certain circumstances a prophet sent by God can act against the commands of the temporal sovereign, or rather, can invoke disobedience against those commands, it suffices to answer the question whether Scripture allows disobedience against the temporal power under any circumstances. Fundamentally, it is clear that in case of a conflict between a divine and a human command, a man should obey the command of God.⁹² Only those commands of God, however, are absolutely binding whose transgression entails eternal damnation, and whose fulfillment entails eternal happiness as a consequence.⁹³ One must therefore clarify what, according to Scripture, is really necessary for salvation. Everything that is necessary for salvation is contained in the two virtues of believing in Christ and obeying the laws. The obedience necessary for salvation, therefore, is nothing other than the obedience to the laws of the temporal power; for the obedience that God demands from us is the serious effort to observe the laws of nature and the laws of the temporal power; obedience to the laws of nature, however, coincides in practice with obedience to the civil laws since the principal law of nature is the command to obey the temporal power.⁹⁴ If we men were capable of completely observing only the obligation to this obedience, we would obtain salvation through precisely this obedience. But because we are all sinners, in addition to this obedience we need also and above all forgiveness of sins; but the forgiveness of sins is granted to us as a

91. See above, p. 35.

92. See above, pp. 34f.

93. "if the command of the Civill Sovereign bee such, as that it may be obeyed, without the forfeiture of life Eternall; not to obey it is unjust . . . But if the command be such, as cannot be obeyed, without being damned to Eternall Death, then . . . the Counsell of our Saviour takes place, Fear not those that kill the body, but cannot kill the soule." *Leviathan*, chap. 43 (403).

94. "The Obedience required at our hands by God, . . . is a serious Endeavour to Obey him . . . But what Commandements are those that God hath given us? . . . our Saviour Christ hath not given us new Laws, but Counsell to observe those wee are subject to; that is to say, the Laws of Nature, and the Laws of our severall Sovereigns . . . The Laws of God therefore are none but the Laws of Nature, whereof the principall is . . . a commandement to obey our Civill Sovereigns." *Leviathan*, chap. 43 (404).

reward for our belief in Christ.⁹⁵ The belief required by Scripture as necessary for salvation is only the belief that Jesus is the Christ.⁹⁶ After clarifying, therefore, what is necessary for salvation, it is not difficult to bring obedience to God and obedience to the temporal power into complete agreement. For if the sovereign is a Christian, then as a Christian he allows the belief, necessary for salvation, that Jesus is the Christ; and as a sovereign he commands obedience to his own laws, i.e., the only obedience necessary for salvation.⁹⁷ If the sovereign is an unbeliever, in this case too every insubordinate subject sins against the laws of God. How, therefore, should the Christian behave if the unbelieving sovereign forbids the belief in Christ that is necessary for salvation? The answer to this is that human commands have no influence on belief: belief is a gift of God, which man can neither give nor take away. The unbelieving sovereign can forbid, not the belief in Christ, but the profession of this belief. A profession with the tongue, however, is a purely external action, in respect of which the Christian, if only he holds firmly in his heart to belief in Christ, may obey every command of the temporal power; he does not need to put himself in danger of life and limb on account of professing with the tongue. The denial of Christ, to which he is forced by a command of his authority, is to be accounted as a fault not against him but against the authority. There is therefore not only no right to resistance, there is not even an obligation to martyrdom. For martyrs, in the genuine sense of the word, are only witnesses of the resurrection of Christ, i.e., such men as have seen Jesus on earth and after the resurrection. Whoever is not explicitly sent to proclaim the belief in Jesus as the Christ is not obligated to suffer death for that belief; if he exposes himself to this danger nevertheless, he may neither complain about his temporal sovereign, who condemns him to death, nor marvel if the heavenly reward is not granted him for an action with which he was not charged.⁹⁸ There are therefore no limits set by revelation to the

95. "because wee are all guilty of disobedience to Gods law, . . . there is required at our hands now, not onely Obedience for the rest of our time, but also a Remission of sins for the time past; which Remission is the reward of our Faith in Christ." *Leviathan*, chap. 43 (403).

96. "The (Unum Necessarium) Onely Article of Faith, which the Scripture maketh simply Necessary to Salvation, is this, that Jesus is the Christ." *Leviathan*, chap. 43 (407).

97. "If he [i.e., the Civill Sovereign] bee a Christian, he alloweth the beleefe of this Article, that Jesus is the Christ; . . . And because he is a Sovereign, he requireth Obedience to all his owne, that is, to all the Civill Lawes; in which also are contained all the Laws of Nature, that is, all the Laws of God." *Ibid.* (413).

98. "And when the Civill Sovereign is an Infidel, every one of his own Subjects that resisteth him, sinneth against the Laws of God . . . And for their Faith, it is internal, and invisible; They

obligation to obey the temporal power. And with this the unity of the ruling power is secured unconditionally.

e. The Kingdom of Darkness

By ascertaining the teaching of Scripture, Hobbes claims to have proven that the dualism of powers, in particular, and the dualism of substances, more generally, have no basis in Scripture and are even contrary to Scripture. Since metaphysical and political dualism, therefore, is not justified by Scripture, is even adverse to Scripture, where does it come from? What are its historical roots? By whom was it brought into the church? What is its human origin? Hobbes answers these questions systematically in the fourth part of *Leviathan*, which is entitled "The Kingdome of Darknesse."

The kingdom of darkness is opposed to the kingdom of God. Its ruler is Satan or the enemy; its subjects are demons, i.e., specters, which are also called "children of darkness." Even the kingdom of the enemy is an earthly kingdom; furthermore, by "Satan" or "enemy" is to be understood, not an individual person, but only an office or a quality;⁹⁹ and finally, demons are not real but only products of human imagination.¹⁰⁰ Hence, the kingdom of darkness is "nothing else but a Confederacy of Deceivers, that to obtain dominion over men in this present world, endeavour by dark, and erroneous

have the licence that Naaman had, and need not put themselves into danger for it." *Leviathan*, chap. 43 (414). "But what (may some object) if a King, or a Senate, or other Sovereign Person forbid us to believe in Christ? To this, I answer, that such Forbidding is of no effect; because Beleeft, and Unbeleeft never follows mens Commands. Faith is a gift of God, which Man can neither give, nor take away by promise of rewards, or menaces of torture. And if it be moreover asked, What if wee bee commanded by our lawfull Prince, to say with our tongue, wee belevee not; must we obey such a command? Profession with the tongue is but an externall thing, and no more then any other gesture whereby we signifie our obedience; and wherein a Christian, holding firmly in his heart the Faith of Christ, hath the same liberty which the Prophet Elisha allowed to Naaman the Syrian. . . . whatsoever a subject . . . is compelled to in obedience to his Sovereign, and doth it not in order to his own mind, but in order to the laws of his country, that action is not his, but his Sovereigns." *Leviathan*, chap. 42 (343f.). "he that is not sent to preach this fundamentall article, but taketh it upon him of his private authority, though he be a Witnesse, and consequently a Martyr . . . , yet he is not obliged to suffer death for that cause; because being not called thereto, tis not required at his hands; nor ought hee to complain, if he loseth the reward he expecteth from those that never set him on work." Ibid. (345).

99. See above, pp. 38f. and p. 43.

100. "Daemons . . . are but Idols, or Phantasms of the braine, without any reall nature of their own, distinct from humane fancy." *Leviathan*, chap. 44 (418).

Doctrines to extinguish in them the Light, both by Nature, and of the Gospel; and so to dis-prepare them for the Kingdome of God to come."¹⁰¹

The "Enemy," thus a confederacy of earthly deceivers, is, however, none other than, above all, the Roman and then the Presbyterian clergy.¹⁰² The clergy, therefore, attempt to gain dominion over men by spreading false doctrines. The general character of these false doctrines has already been determined in the present study: these false doctrines are essentially dualistic. By inquiring, therefore, into the sources of the false doctrines spread by "the Enemy," Hobbes inquires, ipso facto, into the sources of metaphysical as well as political dualism.

The false doctrines in question have four different sources: (1) the distorted interpretation of Scripture, (2) the demonology of the pagan poets, (3) Greek religion and philosophy, and (4) false and untrustworthy traditions.¹⁰³ If one considers that Hobbes does not attach particular value to the source of false doctrines named last,¹⁰⁴ and furthermore, that by the pagan poets whose demonology has been introduced into the church, he understands principally the Greek poets,¹⁰⁵ one receives the following more general division of the sources of the false doctrines: these false doctrines derive partly from the (misunderstood) Scriptures, partly from Hellenism (or rather, from paganism generally).

Hobbes traces the misunderstanding of Scripture back to "three generall Errors":¹⁰⁶ "The greatest, and main abuse of Scripture, and to which almost all the rest are either consequent, or subservient, is the wresting of it, to prove that the Kingdome of God . . . is the present Church."¹⁰⁷ "A second generall abuse of Scripture, is the turning of Consecration into Conjuraction, or Enchantment."¹⁰⁸ "Another generall Error, is from the Misinterpretation of the words Eternall Life, Everlasting Death, and the Second Death,"¹⁰⁹ namely, from the apprehension that these words might refer to an incorporeal soul, and therefore one by nature immortal. Now, both the belief in magic and

101. *Leviathan*, chap. 44 (417-18).

102. "we may justly pronounce for the Authors of all this Spirituall Darknesse, the Pope, and Roman Clergy." *Leviathan*, chap. 47 (478). "The Authors therefore of this Darknesse in Religion, are the Romane, and the Presbyterian Clergy." *Leviathan*, chap. 47 (476).

103. *Leviathan*, chap. 44 (418).

104. He devotes to it a single paragraph; cf. *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (473).

105. Cf. *Leviathan*, chap. 45 (441) and chap. 12 (79ff.).

106. *Leviathan*, chap. 44 (426).

107. *Leviathan*, chap. 44 (419).

108. *Leviathan*, chap. 44 (422).

109. *Leviathan*, chap. 44 (424).

the belief in incorporeal souls, in spirits or specters, were doubtlessly first brought about, not by the misinterpretation of Scripture, but by the common heritage of paganism throughout the world.¹¹⁰ Hence, of the three false doctrines mentioned, there remains the doctrine—which is the sole opinion really brought about by the misunderstanding of Scripture—that the kingdom of God is the present church; that is, the dualism of the temporal and spiritual power, the dualism of *powers*, is typically unclassical.¹¹¹

There is yet another false doctrine to which Hobbes points explicitly as not being of classical origin. The error underlying the Inquisition—that the power of the law, which is a rule for actions only, can be extended to the thoughts and consciences of men—is not classical.¹¹² It is thus unclassical to make man responsible before the law for his thoughts and conscience. This error is also immediately connected to the dualism of powers, to the disastrous weakening of the unity of the regime. For if a man can be condemned to eternal punishment for a false opinion, everyone's natural care for himself will impel him to leave the salvation of his soul to his own judgment rather than to the judgment of another; he will, therefore, set his own opinion, which appeals to revelation, as binding on his *conscience*, against even, or especially, the possibly different opinion of the temporal power, thus acknowledging a divine law in addition to, even against, the law of the temporal power.¹¹³

110. Hence, Hobbes treats these phenomena in his explanation of natural religion in particular; see *Leviathan*, chap. 12 (76ff.).

111. For the religion of the pagans was "a part of humane Politiques; and teacheth part of the duty which Earthly Kings require of their Subjects." *Leviathan*, chap. 12 (79). Cf. also *Elements of Law* 2.6.2. Cf. moreover the following passage in *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (472): "For a Private man, without the Authority of the Common-wealth . . . to Interpret the Law by his own Spirit, is another Error in the Politiques; but not drawn from Aristotle, nor from any other of the Heathen Philosophers. For none of them deny, but that in the Power of making Laws, is comprehended also the Power of Explaining them where there is a need. And are not the Scriptures, in all places where they are Law, made Law by the Authority of the Common-wealth, and consequently, a part of the Civill Law?" Cf. also *English Works*, 4:448, 6:183, 221, and 243f. In *English Works*, 6:276ff., however, Hobbes speaks of the struggle between priests and kings in pagan antiquity.

112. "There is another Errour in their Civill Philosophy (which they never learned of Aristotle, nor Cicero, nor any other of the Heathen,) to extend the power of the Law, which is the Rule of Actions onely, to the very Thoughts, and Consciences of Men, by Examination, and Inquisition of what they Hold." *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (471).

113. "especially in them, who teach, that a man shall bee damned to Eternall and extream torments, if he die in a false opinion concerning an Article of the Christian Faith. For who is there, that knowing there is so great danger in an error, whom the naturall care of himself, compelleth not to hazard his Soule upon his own judgement, rather than that of any other man

Whereas the dualism of powers first arose from the misunderstanding of Scripture, the dualism of *substances* is of pagan, and in particular of Greek, origin. The dualism of substances is the opinion that in addition to corporeal substances, there are also incorporeal substances. This opinion comes about in the following way: when they are not enlightened about the nature of sight and the power of the imagination, men think that their phantasms are real things, existing outside of the human mind; and since one finds nothing that allows itself to be grasped in the place in which these allegedly existing things appear to be, many men are thus inclined to think that these figments of the imagination are incorporeal substances, spirits. The visions of the deceased principally lend themselves to this interpretation: the man who sees a dead person in a dream is inclined to believe that the dead person is an inhabitant of the air, or of heaven or hell, and he does not notice that this person lives and moves only in the dream image. Hence, the belief in incorporeal substances can be characterized, *a potiori* [chiefly], as belief in ghosts.¹¹⁴ And as regards its source, one must say that it rests on the uncritical belief in the power of the imagination. The pagans, and in particular the Greeks, thus think the products of the power of the imagination are independent beings. This opinion, introduced into the church, underlies exorcism, the veneration of images, and the veneration of saints.¹¹⁵ This opinion was completely sanctioned by Greek philosophy, and above all by Aristotelian philosophy, which became the foundation for the philosophy of the church. For the fundamental error of Aristotelian metaphysics is the doctrine that there are certain incorporeal beings in the world; and this doctrine is connected precisely with the belief that the soul of man, after his death, can walk separated from his body and be seen at night among the graves.¹¹⁶

that is unconcerned in his damnation?" Ibid. (472). Cf. in this connection the condemnation of the subversive doctrines "That every private man is Judge of Good and Evill action" and "that whatsoever a man does against his Conscience, is Sinne" at *Leviathan*, chap. 29 (223).

114. "This nature of Sight having never been discovered . . . it was hard for men to conceive of those Images in the Fancy, and in the Sense, otherwise, than of things really without us: Which . . . (because they vanish away, they know not whither, nor how,) will have to be absolutely Incorporeall . . . As if the Dead of whom they Dreamed, were not Inhabitants of their own Brain, but of the Air, or of Heaven, or Hell, not Phantasmes, but Ghosts." *Leviathan*, chap. 45 (440–41). Cf. also *Leviathan*, chap. 45 (270), as well as chap. 12 (77).

115. *Leviathan*, chap. 45 (445 and 455).

116. "From these Metaphysiques [sc. of Aristotle], which are mingled with the Scripture to make Schoole Divinity, wee are told, there be in the world certain Essences separated from Bodies, which they call Abstract Essences, and Substantiall Formes." *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (463). "it is upon this ground [sc. this doctrine of Separated Essences, built on the Vain Philosophy

As the fundamental error of Aristotelian metaphysics is the sanctioning of the vulgar dualism of substances, of the vulgar belief in the real existence of phantasms, so the fundamental error of the Aristotelian moral philosophy and philosophy of the state, which likewise found entrance in the church, is the complete failure to understand the importance and the essence of *law*. Aristotelian moral philosophy completely fails to understand the importance of law by teaching that the general rule for knowing the virtues and vices is being praised or blamed for certain dispositions, and by therefore making the criterion of good and bad the necessarily individual, different likes and dislikes—fundamentally, the appetites, the passions—of each individual, whereas in truth, of course, the standard of good and bad is the law of the state. It is precisely for this reason that Aristotelian moral philosophy is ignorant in the decisive respect: it is no more than a description of one's own passions.¹¹⁷ In other words, it is nothing other than the sanctioning of the passions and therewith of disobedience against the law that is natural to man. That this is the case is shown from the politics both of Aristotle and the other "heathen politicians"¹¹⁸—Socrates, Plato, Cicero, Seneca, Plutarch, etc. etc.—who, behind the fine-sounding name of freedom, promoted anarchy. This politics is antimonarchic, not on the basis of a real study of human nature, but rather because it uncritically submits itself to the practice of the Athenian or Roman body politic; it follows the people's natural aversion to every arbitrary government, whereas of course without arbitrary government

of Aristotle], that when a Man is dead and buried, they say his Soule (that is his Life) can walk separated from his Body, and is seen by night amongst the graves . . . the Errors, which are brought into the Church, from the Entities, and Essences of Aristotle: which it may be he knew to be false Philosophy; but writ it as a thing consonant to, and corrob[or]ative of their Religion; and fearing the fate of Socrates." *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (465). "Ab hac doctrina de essentiis et formis substantialibus daemonologia Graecorum in ecclesia . . . relicta est." [From this doctrine concerning essences and substantial forms, Greek demonology has remained in the Church.] *Opera Latina*, 3:49.

117. "Aristotle, and other Heathen Philosophers define Good, and Evill, by the Appetite of men . . . But in a Common-wealth this measure is false: Not the Appetite of Private men, but the Law, which is the Will and Appetite of the State is the measure. And yet is this Doctrine still practised; and men judge the Goodnesse, or Wickednesse of their own and of other mens actions, and of the actions of the Common-wealth it selfe, by their own Passions." *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (469). "Their Morall Philosophy is but a description of their own Passions. For the rule of Manners . . . is the Law . . . ; that determineth . . . what is Good, and Evill: whereas they make the Rules of Good, and Bad, by their own Liking, and Disliking." *Ibid.* (461). Cf. moreover *De cive* 3.31 and *Behemoth*, 44.

118. See above, n. 28.

perpetual anarchy is inevitable. Aristotle, in particular, completely failed to understand the necessity of arbitrary government by teaching that in a well-ordered commonwealth not men but the laws should govern: as though the laws, which without the hands and swords of men are only words and paper, could enforce themselves, could provide the *force* of law.¹¹⁹ To sum up, Aristotle totally failed to understand that only a given, real, arbitrary law of a legislator able to compel fulfillment of the law can be the rule of ethics.

There are, therefore, two errors, at first glance completely independent of each other, which the clergy took over from Aristotle and disseminated, extinguishing the light of Scripture: the dualism of substances, and the failure to understand the importance and fundamental essence of law. On closer inspection, however, one notices that these two errors hearken back to one and the same mistake of Aristotelian philosophy. The doctrine of the dualism of substances sanctions the *power of the imagination*, as Aristotelian moral philosophy and the philosophy of the state sanctions the *passions*. The power of the imagination, however, rules the opinions of the common man as the passions rule his will. Aristotelian philosophy, therefore, does nothing other than sanction the opinions and aspirations of the common and thereby natural man, whose way of life and thinking are not subjected by Aristotle to

119. "From Aristotles Civill Philosophy, they have learned, to call all manner of Common-wealths but the Popular, . . . Tyranny. All Kings they called Tyrants; . . . And that which offendeth the People, is no other thing, but that they are governed . . . by an Arbitrary government: for which they give evill names to their Superiors; never knowing (till perhaps a little after a Civill warre) that without such Arbitrary government, such Warre must be perpetuall; and that it is Men, and Arms, not Words, and Promises, that make the Force and Power of the Laws. And therefore this is another Errour of Aristotles Politiques, that in a wel ordered Common-wealth, not Men should govern but the Laws." *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (470). "it is an easy thing, for men to be deceived, by the specious name of Libertie . . . And when the same errour is confirmed by the authority of men in reputation for their writings in this subject, it is no wonder if it produce sedition, and change of Government. In these westerne parts of the world, we are made to receive our opinions concerning the Institution, and Rights of Common-wealths, from Aristotle, Cicero, and other men, Greeks and Romanes, that living under Popular States, derived those Rights, not from the Principles of Nature, but transcribed them into their books, out of the Practise of their own Common-wealths, which were Popular." *Leviathan*, chap. 21 (149–150). "[Tyrannicidium] olim ab omnibus sophistis Platone, Aristotele, Cicerone, Seneca, Plutarcho, caeterisque Graecae et Romanae anarchiae fautoribus, non modo licitum, sed etiam maxima laude dignum existimatum est" [(Tyrannicide) of old . . . was by all the philosophers, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, Plutarch, and the rest of the maintainers of the Greek and Roman anarchies, held not only lawful, but even worthy of the greatest praise."] *De cive* 12.3. Cf. moreover *De cive*, preface and 12.1 and 12.3, as well as *Leviathan*, chap. 29 (226) and *Opera Latina*, 5:358f.

any true critique, to any penetrating analysis.¹²⁰ The uncritical character of Aristotelian philosophy (as of that of the ancients generally) is, for its part, a consequence of the fact that this philosophy was a philosophy of the *schools*. After the Athenians gained hegemony in Greece, there were many idle people in Athens who knew of nothing better to do with their time than either to tell and to hear news, or to dispute publicly before the youth of the city about philosophy. Philosophy was therefore a matter of pastime among idle men, of gossiping and frittering away time.¹²¹ No wonder that this philosophy was of no benefit: the natural philosophy of these schools was rather a dream than science, and we have already seen what one should think of their metaphysics, morality, and politics. These philosophers were not concerned with the fundamental matter [*die Sache*]; for if one is concerned with the fundamental matter, with the strict truth, as the geometers are, one is not in need of any schools,¹²² of any gathering places. And what holds for the classical schools holds no less for the present-day universities.¹²³ For why does it matter to men if they *assemble together* in order to philosophize? “Quo . . .

120. Of the Aristotelian principle, underlying traditional politics, that man is a ζῷον πολιτικόν, Hobbes says: “Quod axioma, quamquam a plurimis receptum, falsum tamen, errorque a nimis levi naturae humanae contemplatione profectus est. Causas enim, quibus homines congregantur et societate mutua gaudent, penitus inspectantibus facile constabit, non ideo id fieri, quod aliter natura non possit, sed ex accidente” [Which axiom, though received by most, is yet certainly false; and an error proceeding from our too slight contemplation of human nature. For they who shall more narrowly look into the causes for which men come together, and delight in each other’s company, shall easily find that this happens not because naturally it could happen no otherwise, but by accident]. *De cive* 1.2.

121. “After the Athenians . . . had gotten the Dominions of the Sea . . . and were grown wealthy; they that had no employment, neither at home, nor abroad, had little else to employ themselves in, but either (as St. Luke says, Acts 17.21) in telling and hearing of news, or in discoursing of Philosophy publicly to the youth of the City . . . they spent the time of their Leasure, in teaching or in disputing of their Opinions: and some in any place, where they could get the youth of the City together to hear them talk . . . From this it was, that the place where any of them taught, and disputed, was called Schola, which in their Tongue signifieth Leasure; and their Disputations, Diatribae, that is to say, Passing of the time Also the Philosophers themselves had the name of their Sects, some of them from these their Schools . . . as if we should denominate men from Morefields, and Pauls-Church, and from the Exchange, because they meet there often, to prate and loyter.” *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (459f.).

122. “But what has been the Utility of those Schools? what Science is there at this day acquired by their Readings and Disputings? That wee have of Geometry, which is the Mother of all Naturall Science, wee are not indebted for it to the Schools . . . The naturall Philosophy of those Schools, was rather a Dream than Science.” *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (461).

123. “And for Geometry, till of very late times it had no place at all [sc. in that which is now called an University]; as being subservient to nothing but rigide Truth.” *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (462).

consilio homines congregentur, ex iis cognoscitur quae faciunt congregati . . . ut loquar de iis qui profitentur prae caeteris sapere, si Philosophiae gratia coeatur, quot homines tot sunt qui caeteros docent, nempe tot volunt magistri haberi; alioqui socios non modo, ut alii, non se amant mutuo, sed odio prosequuntur." [How, by what advice, men do meet, will be best known by observing those things which they do when they are met. . . . Lastly, that I may say somewhat of them who pretend to be wiser than others: if they meet to talk of philosophy, look, how many men, so many would be esteemed masters, or else they not only love not their fellows but even persecute them with hatred.] The assemblies for the sake of philosophy therefore have as their purpose "illud eudokimein, existimationem et honorem apud socios" [that same *eudokimein*, esteem and honor, with those with whom they have been conversant]. In other words, the purpose of these assemblies is "Gloria sive bene opinari de se ipso" [glory, or to have a good opinion of oneself].¹²⁴ This is to say, the fact that classical philosophy was characterized by schools, which is the reason for the superficiality of this philosophy, has, for its part, its basis in *vanity*.

The clergy thus introduced a basically erroneous philosophy, arising from vanity, into Christianity. Therefore, not only did they adopt theoretically false, even absurd, doctrines that may in fact even be damnable (if, however, they leave unchallenged the fundamentals of belief that are necessary for salvation, they do not lead to the damnation of their adherents),¹²⁵ but they thereby set themselves in open opposition to Scripture. For they made spiritualist metaphysics into the foundation of a speculative theology; i.e., in place of the commanded worship of the incomprehensible nature of God, they put philosophic disputation about God, the foolhardy attempt to penetrate the mysteries of the divine being; in precisely this way did they cast to the winds the Apostle Paul's warning against vain philosophy, transgress the commandment to "captivate our understanding" to the obedience of belief, and transcend the bounds set by God himself.¹²⁶ The dissemination

124. *De cive* 1.2; cf. also 1.5. Cf. also the pentameter: "Professorum omnes [sc. cellae] ambitione tument" [All professors (sc. of the cell) swell with ambition]. *Opera Latina*, 1:xc1.

125. "St. Paul . . . saith, That . . . the Day of Judgment . . . shall try every mans doctrine . . . And then they that have built false Consequences on the true Foundation, shall see their Doctrines condemned; nevertheless they themselves shall be saved . . . and live eternally." *Leviathan*, chap. 43 (411).

126. "And these are but a small part of the Incongruities they are forced to, from their disputing Philosophically, in stead of admiring, and adoring of the Divine and Incomprehensible Nature." *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (467). "If such Metaphysiques, and Physiques as this, be not Vain

of Greek philosophy, which has its origin in vanity, therefore represents presents an act of *disobedience*. The final basis of any disobedience, however, is that will through which all men in Adam have become guilty of disobedience to God's law, namely, the will "to be as God,"¹²⁷ i.e., *ambition* or *pride*. Hence, the basis for the dissemination of Greek philosophy, which arose from vanity, is *ambition* or *pride*.¹²⁸

That this is the case becomes completely clear if one asks oneself in a most general way: what motive occasioned the clergy both to adopt the false doctrines of the pagans and to expound Scripture erroneously? The provisional answer is avarice and ambition.¹²⁹ But how are these two motives related to each other? Both the limitless striving for riches and the limitless striving for honor and glory are forms of the general inclination of all men to strive perpetually and restlessly after greater and ever greater power.¹³⁰ Hence, Hobbes can identify the ultimate motive of the clergy as "the love of power naturally implanted in mankind."¹³¹ We can here leave undetermined how, in Hobbes's view, the love of power, avarice, and ambition are related to each

Philosophy, there was never any; nor needed St. Paul to give us warning to avoid it." Ibid. (469). Cf. moreover *Leviathan*, chap. 32 (256), chap. 40 (326), and chap. 46 (461).

127. Cf. *De cive* 12.1 and *Leviathan*, chap. 35 (280).

128. "the volumes of disputation about the nature of God . . . tend not to his Honour, but to the honour of our own wits, and learning." *Leviathan*, chap. 31 (252). "Ambo autem Adamus et Eva ambitione ducti, serpenti crediderunt, Deo non crediderunt, et de fructo vetito comederunt." [Both Adam and Eve, however, led by ambition, had believed the serpent, not God, and had eaten from the forbidden fruit.] *Opera Latina*, 3:523. *Ambitio* is therefore the origin of sin; hence *ambitio* is the passion to be attacked; hence Hobbes can say of his *Leviathan* that it is "Justitiae mensura, atque ambitionis elenchus" [The measure of justice, and the elenchus of ambition]. *Opera Latina* [*Vita Tho. Hobbes*], 1:xciv. This is already expressed in the title of *Leviathan*; for the Leviathan is according to Job 41:26 "King of all the children of *pride*." Cf. *Leviathan*, chap. 28, end. As regards *ambitio*, cf. *De cive* 12.9. In another place (*De cive* 1.2 n. 1 end), he refers to *superbia* [pride] as the basis of injustice, which, however, is nothing other than *inanis Gloria* [vain glory], that is to say, *magnifice sentire de se ipso* [to . . . vaunt oneself]. See *De cive* 1.4 and 1.5.

129. Cf., above all, the definition of the "Kingdom of Darkness" (quoted above, pp. 53–54). Avarice or ambition is adduced as a motive of the clergy in the following passages: "ambition or profit of the clergy," chap. 44 (345); "vain-glory and ambition," chap. 42 (352); ambition, chap. 44 (420); tithes for the clergy, *ibid.* (421); "worldly ambition," chap. 45 (455); "worldly benefits," chap. 47 (475); "worldly Riches, Honour and Authority," chap. 47 (478).

130. "Competition of Riches, Honour, Command, or other power." *Leviathan*, chap. 11 (50). "I put for a generall inclination of all mankind, a perpetuall and restlesse desire of Power after power." *Ibid.* (70).

131. *Leviathan*, chap. 42 (394).

other. This much is certain, that Hobbes ascribes to ambition the greatest significance for the formation of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.¹³² And indeed, it is not merely that the clergy, out of ambition, abuse a power conferred upon them by divine appointment; rather, that supposedly divine order *itself*, the fact of an ecclesiastical hierarchy *as such*—since the gospel does not know such a hierarchy—rests on ambition.

For what is the historical origin of this hierarchy? The clergy, who partly created the false doctrines and partly adopted them, are principally the *Roman* clergy. As the Roman clergy, they are the heirs and the perpetuators of the Roman Empire, but that means of a state that was itself built up, not in the spirit of a reasonable striving for security, but in that of a vain lust for conquest, of pride and ambition for stately splendor.¹³³ The papacy is nothing other than the specter, the "ghost," of the deceased Roman Empire, which sits crowned on the grave of that pagan power.¹³⁴ Roman imperialism, as it were, after failing in its attempt to conquer the world with weapons, with the means of the real world, repeated its attempt to establish a universal monarchy with fantastic means, with the help of figments of the power of the imagination.

f. Characteristics of the Critique of the Tradition

The critique of the tradition presents itself as the enterprise of dismantling the entire tradition arising from the foundation of Scripture—both the dogma and the hierarchy of the church, of *any* church—right down to its

132. Cf. also the following passage: "Eodem quoque spectat canonizatio sanctorum, quam ethnici apotheosis appellarunt. Nam qui subditos alienos tanto praemio allicere potest, talis gloriae avidos ad quidlibet audendum et faciendum inducere potest. Quid enim nisi honorem apud posteros quaesiverunt Decii aliique Romani." [To this end attends the *canonization of saints*, which the heathen called *apotheosis*. For he that can allure foreign subjects with so great a reward, may bring those who are greedy of such glory, to dare and do anything. For what was it but an honourable name with posterity, which the Decii and other Romans sought after.] *De cive* 18.14. "oriuntur Ravilliaci et Clementes, qui cum reges suos occidendo ambitioni inservirent alienae, Deo se servire arbitrabantur." [there arise Ravaiilacs and Cléments, who decided to serve God Himself, when, in slaying their kings, they were serving the ambition of another.] *De homine* 13.7.

133. Cf. *De cive*, epistola dedicatoria and 13.14; *Leviathan*, chap. 21 (150) and chap. 29 (225); *English Works*, 4:288.

134. "And if a man consider the originall of this great Ecclesiasticall Dominion, he will easily perceive, that the Papacy, is no other, than the Ghost of the deceased Romane Empire, sitting crowned upon the grave thereof: For so did the Papacy start up on a Sudden out of the Ruines of that Heathen Power." *Leviathan*, chap. 47 (480).

foundation in Scripture for the sake of preserving and restoring its foundation.¹³⁵ This critique, therefore, is consciously only destructive. Beyond the explicit opinion of Hobbes, however, it is only destructive in that it is not guided by a positive, original understanding of Scripture. With this statement we do not mean to exclude Hobbes's being proved right, over against the tradition, in the eyes of an unpartisan judge, in this or that point in his exegesis of Scripture. But even in these cases, it would always remain to ask whether the manifest departure of tradition from the explicit teachings of Scripture, even if its deviation from and indeed contradiction of Scripture is not that "harmony and scope of the whole Bible" that Hobbes invokes, is more correct than the insistence on the literal sense of Scripture, which has, in addition, the neglect of all texts "of obscure, or controverted Interpretation"¹³⁶ as its condition, and therefore arbitrariness as its principle.

In truth, Hobbes's critique of the tradition on the basis of Scripture is guided not by the earnest wish to find in Scripture the tree of life, the divine order of human life, but by the calculated intention to secure a fixed view, independent of Scripture, of the human ordering of human life, through subsequent recourse to Scripture against objections on the part of the church and theology. The investigation of the meaning that the word *spirit* has in the Bible is thus preceded by an explanation of the scientific, as well as the vulgar, meaning of the words *body* and *spirit*, which rests utterly on Hobbes's peculiar principles, and this explanation is evidently decisive for the exegesis of Scripture introduced only afterward.¹³⁷ And the biblical-scientific [*bibelwissenschaftliche*]* critique of the dualism of powers completely presupposes the central thoughts of Hobbesian politics.¹³⁸ We could, and we had to, disregard the philosophic presuppositions of the critique of the tradition, if Hobbes's fiction of a pure investigation into Scripture was to have even the slightest validity; this fiction must, however, be reckoned with because it is grounded in the fundamental matter: for how else, other than by finding oneself prepared to acknowledge Scripture alone as the basis for argumentation, can one criticize a position whose most radical representatives fundamentally question the right of reason not to obey revelation? But as necessary

135. See above, n. 12.

136. *Leviathan*, chap. 43 (414).

137. *Leviathan*, chap. 34, beginning.

* See Spinoza's *Critique of Religion*, 251–68, *The Early Writings of Leo Strauss*, ed. Michael Zank (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 139–200, and Zank's discussion of this term in, 196–97 n. 3—TRANS.

138. *Leviathan*, chap. 38, beginning.

as this fiction also is, it is in reality *only* a fiction. This is to say that the critique that is exercised only fictitiously and only subsequently on the basis of Scripture but in truth and originally on the basis of philosophic presuppositions thoroughly independent of Scripture is not that critique of religion which we identified at the outset as the presupposition of both Hobbes's political science and his philosophy in general.

The philosophic presuppositions that, not being derived from the Bible, are made by Hobbes into the basis of the interpretation of the Bible are the monism of substances and—based on that—the monism of powers. The entire structure of the Hobbesian critique makes sense only on the condition that the monism of substances is the metaphysical presupposition of the monism of powers, or that the dualism of substances is the metaphysical presupposition of the dualism of powers.¹³⁹ As long as he argues on the basis of Scripture, however, Hobbes cannot call into question the dualism of God and creation, and therefore the possibility of miracles, as well as the possibility, grounded in that first possibility, of a nonspiritual justification of the dualism of powers. He is, therefore, compelled to engage in a critique of the dualism of powers that, if sufficient for practical purposes, is still thoroughly unsatisfactory theoretically. There are two different ways by which he arrives at the result wished for by him. *First*, the method of *making outdated*: Hobbes admits miracles and their political consequences, but he denies the relevance of what he has admitted. He thus acknowledges the kingdom of God resting on revelation (though with the qualification, arising from the denial of the dualism of substances, that this kingdom is entirely an earthly one), but he claims that it is fully in the past, or rather really in the future. With this intention, he repeatedly emphasizes, in particular, the exceptional status of the apostolic age as well as of the immediately following age.¹⁴⁰ *Second*, the method of *erosion*: Hobbes admits miracles and their political consequences, but he disputes the political significance of what he has admitted. He thus admits that there is a spiritual power that rests on divine appointment through Christ;¹⁴¹ but he then shows in the sequel that this

139. Hobbes justifies the critique of the dualism of substances he sketches in *Leviathan* with the following words: "But to what purpose (may some man say) is such subtilty in a work of this nature, where I pretend to nothing but what is necessary to the doctrine of Government and Obedience? It is to this purpose, that men may no longer suffer themselves to be abused, by them, that by this doctrine of Separated Essences, . . . would fright them from Obeying the Laws of their Countrey." *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (465).

140. *Leviathan*, chap. 42 (346, 368 f., and 383) and chap. 45 (445). Cf. also n. 77 above.

141. *Leviathan*, chap. 42, beginning.

"power" is nothing more than the commission to teach and to preach and so on, in no way implies the power to command, and is therefore in truth no power at all. He thus admits, in particular, that the power of binding and loosing, to which the right of excommunication belongs, had devolved upon the apostles and their successors; but he then shows that this power (in Christian states) is confined to the right of spiritual powers to announce the pronounced judgment of the secular courts in the church, or to their right of no longer associating with their "scholars" who, in spite of their warnings, stubbornly continue to lead an unchristian life—provided that this right is not abrogated by a command of the temporal power to the contrary.¹⁴²

Forced by the presupposition of miracles, which cannot be gotten around, to a modified acknowledgment of spirits and angels—namely, as corporeal beings—Hobbes insists even more emphatically on the unconditional denial of the devil and hell. Hobbes, therefore, in no way turns solely against the belief in *incorporeal* substances as such, but also and especially against the belief in evil, *terrifying* superhuman powers as such. With this aim the foundation of Hobbes's critique of the religious tradition, indeed of his critique of religion in general, is disclosed: this foundation is *Epicureanism*.¹⁴³ We understand by Epicureanism not primarily the *doctrine* of Epicurus and his school, but rather an interest natural to man, a uniform and elementary *outlook* [*Gesinnung*], which merely found its classic expression in the philosophy of Epicurus.¹⁴⁴ We hereby take as our own the viewpoint of the Jewish and Christian tradition, which, often without thinking of the specific teachings of Epicurus, and at times even without knowing much about these, saw in the Epicurean *the* enemy of biblical truth. The Epicurean outlook is the will to free man from the fear, determined by nature, of the divine and of death, so that on the basis of a prudent calculation of the chances for pleasure and pain that present themselves to man, based on a careful elimination

142. *Leviathan*, chapter 42 (347–54).

143. Hobbes's explicit judgment of Epicurean philosophy (see *Opera Latina*, 3:540, *English Works*, 4:387 and 6:98) does not differ from his explicit, more or less disparaging judgment of ancient philosophy as a whole (cf. also the extensive critique of Epicurus-Lucretius in *De corpore* 26.3). That there is in truth a close connection between Hobbes and Epicureanism, however, has never been altogether unrecognized. One need only refer to the judgment of J[ohann] Fr[anz] Buddeus, who characterizes Hobbes as "Epicureae philosophiae consecrator" [an adherent of the Epicurean philosophy]. *Isagoge historico-theologica ad theologiam universam* (Leipzig, 1727), 280, as well as 1383; see also Buddeus, *Institutiones theologicae dogmaticae* (Leipzig, 1724), 455. [See Buddeus, *Gesammelte Schriften*, reprint ed., 10 vols. (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1999–2006).]

144. Cf., in this connection, Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, 38–52, 58ff., 90f., 107f., 209ff., and 222.

or avoidance of everything troublesome, disturbing, and painful, one might lead a thoroughly happy life. It belongs essentially to this outlook that it is in the interest of the man governed by it to eliminate the fear of gods and of death, and thus to take up the critique of religion. And it is not only the will to take up the critique of religion that is predetermined by this outlook, but even the structure of the critique of religion as well. This outlook, however, is grounded so deeply in human nature that it cannot have been, and was not, effective merely for the adherents of a particular philosophy. We therefore leave aside the features peculiar to the school of Epicurus; we even pass over those doctrines that arise from Greek presuppositions generally; we emphasize solely those typical thoughts, developed in a classic manner by Epicurus, or made by him into express means for the critique of religion out of teachings already handed down to him, that are revived in essentially unaltered form in the seventeenth century, and in particular by Hobbes. These thoughts are the following: (1) The fear of the gods and of death, which dominates man from the outset and prevents his happiness, can be banished by the science of nature alone; science banishes this fear by revealing the groundlessness of the fear; science thus demonstrates in one move that the fear that constitutes the essence of religion is a consequence of ignorance, of a lack of knowledge about nature.¹⁴⁵ (2) Science comprehends all occurrence as determined, unchanging, regular, steady, not undetermined, arbitrary, chaotic, erratic: Nature is potentially and actually *operâ sine divom* [at work without god];¹⁴⁶ the gods do not need to act, and they do not act; man therefore does not need to fear them.¹⁴⁷ (3) If nature is understood in such a way as not to be troubling to man, it would be understood as without riddle and secret in principle, and thus only corporeal substances could be acknowledged as substances, and only local motions as alterations: the

145. Cf. *Leviathan*, chaps. 11 (74) and 12 (76) with Epicurus, *Sententiae Selectae* 10–13, Lucretius, *De rerum natura* 1.140ff. and 5.1148–98, Cicero, *De finibus* 1.13.43–14.46, as well as 1.19.64. The passage from Lucretius 2.55–58 also pertinent here is used by Hobbes as a motto for a study in the critique of religion (*English Works*, 4:385) [*An Historical Narration Concerning Heresy, and the Punishment Thereof*].

146. Cf., above all, Lucretius, *De rerum natura* 1.143ff. As regards the thought concerning the determined character of all events, it is sharpened by Hobbes's determinism in a way that far exceeds the teaching of Epicurus.

147. The Epicurean doctrine of the gods has understandably no immediate equivalent in Hobbes; see the following paragraph in the text. Even so, one recognizes a kinship between the *quasi corpus* [as it were body] of the Epicurean gods and the spiritual bodies of the angels and the elect.

Epicurean outlook demands a mechanistic-corporealistic physics.¹⁴⁸ (4) As physics generally frees man from the fear of gods, so psychology frees him from the fear of death; the fear of death is in large part fear of a fearsome life after death; the belief in a fearsome life after death has its basis in phantasms, which, as such, are not scrutinized; for the sake of his ease, man requires an analysis of fantasy and, which is inseparable from this, an analysis of sense perception; he requires this analysis all the more as the material for the pre-scientific conceptions of gods comes from fantasy, from dream.¹⁴⁹

Compared with original Epicureanism, Hobbes's critique of the religious tradition presents itself as a post-Christian modification of Epicureanism. To be sure, this modification was, at least in principle, accounted for and settled by Epicurus. Epicurus says, "It would be better to follow the myth about the gods than to be a slave to the fate of which the physicists speak. For the one sketches out a hope that the gods, through honor, may be turned by entreaty, but the other carries with it an inexorable necessity."¹⁵⁰ Epicurus thereby indicates the possibility that precisely through belief in active gods, the fear, not merely of the gods, but also of death can be banished; to this end, the gods would admittedly have to be *benevolent* gods: they would have to use their power solely in order to prepare man for a happy life during and after this one. This possibility deserved precedence, precisely on Epicurus's terms, over Epicurean physics and theology; for the fear of death in particular is allayed in an incomparably more effective manner through the belief in active and solely benevolent gods, and all the more so through the belief in an

148. Buddeus refers to the dependence of Hobbes's critique of spiritualism on Epicurus's teaching. ["Ad recentiores si nos convertamus philosophos, primum se nobis offert Epicureae philosophiae consecrator THOMAS HOBBIUS, qui, cum non alias, quam corporeas, seu materiales admitteret substantias, spiritibus in suo systemate locum concedere non potuit." (If we turn to more recent philosophers, the first to present himself to us is Thomas Hobbes, a follower of Epicurean philosophy, who, since he did not accept substances other than corporeal or material ones, could not allow a place for spirits in his system.)] *Isagoge historico-theologica*, 280.

149. Hobbes says of one of his books about physical matters, "Ille docet motus animi et phantasmata sensus, Nec sanos patitur spectra timere viros" [It teaches the motions of the spirit and the phantasms of the senses, and that sane men not be afflicted by or fear specters]. *Opera Latina*, I:xciv. [The loose English verse translation of the *Vita Thomae Hobbes*, the "Verse Life," from which this quotation comes, reads: "Where I Teach Ethicks, the Phantomes of the Sense / How th' Wise with Spectres, fearless may dispense." *Human Nature and De Corpore Politico*, ed. J. C. A. Gaskin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 261.] Cf. moreover *Leviathan*, chap. 12 (77) with Lucretius 1.96ff. and 5.1148ff. Cf. also *Opera Latina*, I:xviii.

150. Diogenes Laërtius 10 §134. ['ἔπει κρείττον ἦν τῷ περὶ θεῶν μύθῳ κατακολουθεῖν ἢ τῇ τῶν φυσικῶν εἰμαρμένη δουλεύειν· ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἐλπίδα παραιτήσεως ὑπογράφει θεῶν διὰ τιμῆς, ἡ δὲ ἀπαραίτητον ἔχει τὴν ἀνάγκην']

omnipotent and solely benevolent God who rewards men with eternal happiness without ever or without substantially punishing them, than through the dubious argument that death is nothing to us because after death we perceive nothing more.¹⁵¹ If the belief in the pagan gods is therefore replaced by the belief in an omnipotent, solely benevolent God, the possibility opens up that the Epicurean outlook not only no longer requires the critique of religion, not only is compatible with religious conceptions, but even recognizes in religious conceptions the most appropriate perspective, the one most conducive to tranquility and the elimination of terror, the most, even the only, consoling and *therefore* true perspective. Hence, one can grasp the fact that ever since revealed religion encountered the Greek world, men have come forward time and again who, in conceiving of the God of the Bible as a solely benevolent God, generally denied God's punitive justice because it is incompatible with God's benevolence, or took from God's punitive justice every concrete significance for the life of man by invoking God's benevolence to contest the terrible consequences of the divine punitive justice claimed by the tradition. The most radical form in which this possibility was realized is the doctrine of Marcion; and this doctrine was repudiated as a modified Epicureanism by none other than Tertullian.¹⁵² The critique of the religious tradition by the modern Enlightenment—characteristically directed, just

151. Epicurus, *Sententiae Selectae* 2. Cf. in this connection the statement of the Epicurean Gassendi: "si res suavis est, mortem reputare ut malorum finem, longe suavius est, accessio nem praeterea bonorum summorum sperare, pari ratione, qua athletam non tam delectat, quod a contentione luctaque cessaturus sit, quam quod praemium consequuturus." [If it is sweet to regard death as the end of evils, it is far sweeter to hope, in addition, for the coming of the highest good things, for the same reason that it does not please an athlete so much that he is going to finish the contest and battle than that he is going to receive a prize.] *Syntagma philosophiae Epicuri* (The Hague, 1659), 31.

152. "Si aliquem de Epicuri schola deum affectavit Christi nomine titolare, ut quod beatum et incorruptibile sit neque sibi neque alii molestias praestet (hanc enim sententiam ruminans Marcion removit ab illo severitates et iudiciares vires), aut in totum immobilem et stupentem Deum concepisse debuerat (et quid illi cum Christo, molesto et Judaeis per doctrinam et sibi per sensum?), aut de ceteris motibus cum agnovisse (et quid illi cum Epicuro, nec sibi nec Christianis necessario?). [If (Marcion) had affected to give some god of the school of Epicurus the name of Christ, on the grounds that what is blessed and incorruptible would bring trouble neither to itself nor to another (for in ruminating over this opinion, Marcion has removed from Him the severity and the force of judgment), he ought either to have conceived of a completely immobile and rigid god (and what would that one have to do with Christ, who troubled the Jews through his teaching and himself through what he felt?), or to have recognized him as having other emotions (and what would that one have to do with Epicurus, not being a kinsman either to him or to Christians?).] *Adversus Marcionem* 1.25. As regards the "Deus optimus" [best God], Tertullian says moreover: "Sed puto jam et non optimus jam aliquid et cum Creatore moratus, nec in

like that of Gnosticism and Marcion, against the Old Testament, above all—presents itself in a very different manner outwardly but is guided in principle by the same tendency. The enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, insofar as it preserves the connection with the Bible to some slight extent, is characterized by its attacking the traditional teachings and outlooks by appealing to the merciful benevolence of God. More precisely, the emphatic ranking of the merciful benevolence of God over his power, his honor, and his punitive anger is peculiar to this enlightenment; for it, God is not primarily the demanding, the summoning, but rather the mercifully benevolent God. This is what is meant when Hobbes argues that the eternal punishments of hell are incompatible with the *benevolence* and the *mercy* of God, and hence when he claims that the damned would be destroyed after the resurrection.¹⁵³

In this respect as in so many others, Hobbes follows the teaching of the *Socinians*.¹⁵⁴ Socinianism is as it were the extreme limit of Hobbes's

totum Epicuri deus." [But I do not think he is best anymore, now that he has spent some time with the Creator, and He is not a completely Epicurean god.] Ibid., 4.15. Cf. also 2.16.

153. "And perhaps if the death of a sinner were, as [Bishop Bramhall] thinks, an eternal life in extreme misery, a man might as far as Job hath done, expostulate with God Almighty; . . . accusing him . . . of little tenderness and love to mankind." *English Works*, 5:103f. "But though God have power to afflict a man, and not for sin without injustice, shall we think God so cruel as to afflict a man, and not for sin, with extreme and endless torment? Is it not cruelty? No more than to do the same for sin, when he that so afflicteth might without trouble have kept him from sinning." Ibid., 5:17. "a justitia Dei, qui cruciatus aeternos peccatoribus comminatus est, arguere aeternitatem ipsorum cruciatuum non potes. Etsi enim qui bona quae debentur non praestat, injustus sit, is tamen, qui mala vel damna debita non praestat, injustus non est, sed misericors. Quanto minus Deus, qui est infinite misericors, non poterit sine justitiae suae violatione mitigare tum diuturnitatem tum acerbitem meritum poenarum?" [from the justice of God, who has threatened the sinners with eternal torments, you cannot prove the eternity of those torments. For although he who does not bring forward the good things that are owed may be unjust, nevertheless, he who does not bring forward the evil or harmful things that are owed is not unjust, but merciful. How much less will God, who is infinitely merciful, not be able, without a violation of his justice, to mitigate the permanence and bitterness of the deserved punishments?] *Opera Latina*, 3:52. Cf. moreover *Leviathan*, chap. 44 (431), *De homine* 14.6, and *English Works*, 4:354, as well as above, pp. 43ff.

154. "[Hobbes] témoigne aussi qu'il lui semble que les peines des méchants doivent cesser par leur destruction; c'est à peu près le sentiment des sociniens, mais il semble que les siens vont bien plus loin." [(Hobbes) testifies also that it seems to him that the pains of the wicked must end in their destruction; this opinion closely approaches that of the Socinians, but it seems that he goes much further.] Leibniz, *Réflexions sur le livre de Hobbes* . . . § 2. [This translation is taken from Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Theodicy*, trans. E. M. Huggard (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951), 394.] "[Sociniani] aeternitatem . . . poenarum infernalium cum iustitia et bonitate divina conciliari non posse existimantes, quidam illorum annihilationem potius damnatorum,

approach to Scripture: Hobbes accepts the teaching of Scripture, if at all, only according to the Socinian interpretation. Above all, he takes over the central thought of Socinianism according to which the essence of Christianity is the proclamation and guarantee of immortality, in such a way, however, that the "forgiveness of sins is still left entirely out of view, or is taken account of only as a factor in eternal life."¹⁵⁵ It therefore serves only to sharpen the fundamental thought of Socinianism that Hobbes teaches, "to be saved from sin, is to be saved from all the Evill, and Calamities [i.e., and therefore, above all, from the death] that Sinne hath brought upon us."¹⁵⁶ From Socinianism, accordingly, Hobbes came to understand the hope for immortality in the true Epicurean way of thinking as a simple guarantee against the fear of death, and not primarily as the reproachful reminder of man's duty and guilt. The presupposition for this conception of immortality is that the significance of God's punitive justice, if it is not denied in general, at any rate recedes behind his mercy.¹⁵⁷ We forgo developing the individual Socinian teachings in their connection with the principle mentioned. We emphasize here only the most important agreements between Hobbes and Socinianism.¹⁵⁸ The prin-

quam aeternitatem poenarum admittere voluerunt." [(Some of) the Socinians, considering that the eternity of infernal punishments cannot be reconciled with divine justice and goodness, wished to accept the annihilation of those condemned rather than the eternity of their punishments.] Buddeus, *Institutiones theologiae dogmaticae*, 490. "Poenas . . . aeternas [Sociniani] non positive, sed negative interpretantur, per annihilationem scilicet eorum, qui durissima illa merebantur." [The Socinians interpret eternal punishments not in a positive but in a negative way, that is, as the annihilation of the people who deserved these hardest things.] Nicol[aus] Arnold, *Religio Sociniana seu catechesis Racoviana maior publicis disput. refutata* (Franeker, Netherlands, 1654), 101. Arnold points out, moreover (p. 107), that the Socinians had, to his knowledge, "not yet" dared to express openly their opinion about the fate of the damned. This should be compared with Hobbes's caution in handling this question (mentioned above, p. 44). Cf. also O. Fock, *Der Socinianismus nach seiner Stellung in der Gesamtentwicklung des Christlichen Geistes, nach seinem Verlauf, und nach seinem Lehrbegriffe* (Kiel, 1847), 718ff.

155. Adolf von Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* (Freiburg: Paul Siebeck, 1897), 3:715. [Strauss's note cites p. 681, evidently referring to an earlier edition with different pagination, which we have unfortunately not been able to track down. We have used an English translation by Neil Buchanan in: Dr. Adolph Harnack, *History of Dogma*, vol. 7 (Boston: Little, Brown, 1905), 153.]

156. *Leviathan*, chap. 38 (316). Cf. also the comment, "[Christ's] eternall Kingdome, wherein shall be Protection, and Life everlasting," *Leviathan*, chap. 42 (360).

157. Faustus Socinus, *Praelectiones theologiae*, chap. 16. The formulations in *De homine* 14.6 are based on this chapter, as well as on chapters 15, 17, 22, and 23. Cf. in addition Arnold, *Religio Sociniana*, 92-97.

158. It should be noted in this connection that Hobbes's *Art of Sophistry* (*English Works*, 6:529-36), which probably appeared around 1636, is an imitation of Faustus Socinus's *Elementi [Elenchi] sophistici . . . explicati, et exemplis Theologicis illustrati* (Rakow, 1625).

ciple of Scripture that is decisive for Hobbes's critique of the tradition, by which both the ecclesiastical tradition and, especially, the inner testimony of the holy spirit are rejected as presuppositions for the understanding of Scripture, is Socinian.¹⁵⁹ The conviction that the sole standard of belief is Scripture, and that the interpretation of Scripture is a matter for the reasonable judgment of individuals, is Socinian.¹⁶⁰ The distinction between that part of Scripture which is necessary for salvation and that part which is only "additamentum . . . vel probatio doctrinae" [an addition . . . or approbation of doctrine] is Socinian.¹⁶¹ The replacement of "Greek" theology by "biblical," according to which, among other things, God's being is explained as his power over us, God's eternity as infinite duration in time, is Socinian.¹⁶² The critique of the Trinity, in particular the denial of the divinity of Christ, is Socinian.¹⁶³ The preference, given with the denial of Christ's divinity, of the teaching of Christ's office over the teaching of Christ's person is Socinian.¹⁶⁴ The denial of natural immortality, i.e., of the immortality of the soul, as well as of the claim that between bodily death and the resurrection there is no life whatsoever, is Socinian.¹⁶⁵ Moreover, the denial of knowledge of God that is

159. Cf. *Leviathan*, chap. 43 (405f.) and chap. 45 (451) with F. Socinus, *Opera Omnia in Duos Tomos Distincta* (Amsterdam, 1656), 2:358 and Arnold, *Religio Sociniana*, 39f.

160. Cf. above, pp. 34–35 with Fock, *Der Socinianismus*, 381.

161. Cf. *Leviathan*, chap. 43, with Socinus, *Opera Omnia*, 2:278.

162. Cf. Arnold, *Religio Sociniana*, 80ff. and 85ff., as well as Fock, *Der Socinianismus*, 427ff. In Hobbes, cf. the explanation of divine attributes as the attributes of honor, i.e., of the recognition of power; as regards the eternity of God, cf., among others, *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (464).

163. Even Hobbes's claim that Christ is a "Person" of God in the same sense as Moses was prepared by the Socinians; cf. *Leviathan*, chap. 16 (114) with Arnold, *Religio Sociniana*, 138f. and 344.

164. Cf. Fock, *Der Socinianismus*, 551f., and *Leviathan*, chap. 41.

165. "Tantum id mihi videtur statui posse, post hanc vitam, animam, sive, animum hominis non ita per se subsistere, ut praemia ulla poenasve sentiat, vel etiam ista sentiendi sit capax . . . statuo . . . animae nomine [sc. in S. Scriptura] vitam significari . . . Vivere . . . adhuc apud Deum is dici et potest, et debet, qui aliquando in vitam, eamque immortalem ad ipso Domino [omnino] revocabitur." [I think that this much could be established: after this life the spirit or the soul of the human does not exist in itself in such a way as to feel any rewards or punishments or even to be capable of feeling these things . . . I establish that the name soul (that is, in the Holy Scripture) signifies life . . . Still that person can and should be called to live with God who one day will be recalled in life and in immortal life by God himself.] Socinus, *Opera Omnia*, 1:454 b. As regards Hobbes, cf. above, pp. 39–43. In particular, cf. the interpretation of Genesis 2:17 and Romans 5:12ff. in Socinus, *Opera Omnia*, 1:537 and 541, as well as 2:261, with *Leviathan*, chap. 38 (308f.); cf. moreover the interpretation of the story of the rich man and of Lazarus as a mere parable, as well as that of Luke 20:36–38, in Socinus, *Opera Omnia*, 1:145, with *Leviathan*, chap. 44 (431).

either (a) innate or (b) acquired through consideration of creation is Socinian. Also, the name of God "non esse nomen essentiae sive naturae, sed officii et dignitatis" [being the name not of an essence or nature, but of office and dignity] is Socinian. The replacement of satisfaction for sins by forgiveness of sins is Socinian.¹⁶⁶ Hobbes's critique of the tradition differs from Socinianism, first, in its view of the Christian state, which is fully incompatible with Socinian principles—this view is derived from *Erastianism*—and, second, in not only sharpening the antispiritualism inherent in Socinianism but even making it into the leitmotif of the investigation; Hobbes's clear explication of antispiritualism is made possible by *Epicureanism*.

In sum, Hobbes's critique of the tradition—apart from the teaching of the Christian state that belongs to it—can be characterized in the following manner: this critique is based on a complete radicalization of Socinianism along the lines of Epicureanism, or rather on an Epicureanism that ventures into the light only under the cover of Socinianism, as a position that is indeed undoubtedly honestly faithful to Scripture, but that, of the positions faithful to Scripture in the seventeenth century, comes closest to Epicureanism. It remains to ask whether the reservations regarding Epicureanism are based only on a false, external deference to the power of the spiritual authority, as it first seems, or whether a considerable significance can be attributed to them.

B. THE CRITIQUE OF SCRIPTURE

The critique of the tradition was conducted on the basis of the presupposition that Scripture is the word of God and that it accordingly transmits and vouches for teachings that cannot be understood, proven, or refuted by finite human understanding and that are therefore binding *only because* they are revealed. The suprarational teachings transmitted by Scripture should, however, be not only true but also of the highest importance, namely, necessary for salvation. Every man is by nature most interested in salvation, in eternal life; but that there is salvation and how one can obtain it man can know only through Scripture. The suprarational teachings necessary for salvation, which are vouched for by Scripture, are characterized not only by the fact that they are communicated as revealed, and therefore as though by a miracle, but also by the fact that their content presupposes the possibility and reality of miracles. This presupposition, however, is what—in addition

166. Cf. *Leviathan*, chap. 38, end, 41, beginning, and 43 (412), as well as *De homine* 14.6 with Socinus, *Praelectiones theologicae*, chaps. 15–17.

to spiritualism—fundamentally calls into question the politics taught by Hobbes.¹⁶⁷ The shaking of the authority of Scripture, indeed of the possibility of revelation in general, is therefore the *conditio sine qua non* [indispensable condition] for the ultimate safeguard, if not for the original possibility, of Hobbesian politics.

a. The Knowability and the Believability of Revelation

According to Hobbes's claim, the two questions How do we *know* that Scripture is the word of God? and Why do we *believe* that Scripture is the word of God? are put wrongly; he explains that the only acceptable question is: By what authority has Scripture been made *law*?¹⁶⁸ The answer to this question, the only one acceptable, is that Scripture can be made law only by the authority of the temporal power.¹⁶⁹ This is to say that Scripture on its own has no legal force at all. If, however, it is made law by a head of state, it is established thereby only that one may not *express* criticism [*Kritik*] of Scripture.¹⁷⁰ Scripture, therefore, even in being made law by the head of state, does not thus obtain a *real* authority, binding on the conscience.¹⁷¹ This complete

167. See above, p. 45ff.

168. "It is a question much disputed between the divers sects of Christian Religion, From whence the Scriptures derive their Authority; which question is also propounded sometimes in other terms, as, How wee know them to be the Word of God, or, Why we believe them to be so: And the difficulty of resolving it, ariseth chiefly from the impropernesse of the words wherein the question it self is couched. For it is believed on all hands, that the first and originall Author of them is God; and consequently the question disputed, is not that. Again, it is manifest, that none can know they are Gods Word, (though all true Christians believe it,) but those to whom God himself hath revealed it supernaturally; and therefore the question is not rightly moved, of our *Knowledge* of it. Lastly, when the question is propounded of our *Beleeve*; because some are moved to beleeve for one, and others for other reasons, there can be rendred no one generall answer for them all. The question truly stated is, By what Authority they are made *Law*." *Leviathan*, chap. 33 (267f.).

169. "the Scripture of the New Testament is there only Law, where the lawfull Civill Power hath made it so." *Leviathan*, chap. 42 (361). That the same goes for the Old Testament is shown in the same passage, *ibid.* (356–59). Cf. moreover *Leviathan*, chap. 33 (260 and 268).

170. The commandment to captivate reason to belief is thus reduced to the commandment to *speak* "as (by lawfull Authority) we are commanded . . . though the mind be incapable of any Notion at all from the words spoken." *Leviathan*, chap. 32 (256).

171. One should compare the following passage to the sequence knowledge-belief-law (see n. 168 above): "But whether men *Know*, or *Beleeve*, or *Grant* the Scriptures to be Word of God; if out of such places of them, as are without obscurity, I shall shew what Articles of Faith are necessary, and onely necessary for Salvation, those men must needs *Know*, *Beleeve*, or *Grant* the same." *Leviathan*, chap. 43 (407). Regarding the meaning of "grant," cf. *De cive* 18.4.

dispensability of the authority of Scripture, which Hobbes effects, shows as clearly as possible that for Hobbes himself, Scripture is in no way authoritative. This is in fact the meaning of his rejection of the questions of how we know or why we believe that Scripture is the word of God: Hobbes does not *know*, in fact he does not even *believe*, that Scripture is revealed.

A *knowledge* of the revealed character of Scripture, in Hobbes's view, would be granted on the condition that it could be grounded, either in the infallibility of the church, or in the inner testimony of the holy spirit. These theological modes of justification are explicitly rejected by Hobbes.¹⁷² He thereby only follows his Socinian teachers who had rejected, in particular, the Reformers' justification of the authority of Scripture according to the inner testimony of the holy spirit.¹⁷³ Now the Socinians had replaced the theological justifications with a purely rational, historical justification. By denying, in plain terms, that knowledge of the revealed character of Scripture is possible, Hobbes tacitly rejects the rational, historical justification as well. In place of the historical *justification* of the *revealed character*, he puts the historical *critique* of the age and therewith of the *authenticity* of the biblical Scriptures.

The historical-critical study¹⁷⁴ leads to the result, apparently quite favorable to Scripture, "that the Old and New Testament, as we have them now, are the true Registers of those things, which were done and said by the Prophets, and Apostles."¹⁷⁵ But Hobbes arrives at this reassuring result only after he has discussed and rejected the objection that the New Testament writings, in particular, could have been corrupted by the Christian clergy. What is important is not that in this passage he explains that the suspicion of falsification is unjustified—in another passage he makes it understood that as regards many texts of the New Testament, the suspicion of corruption

172. "why we beleeve the Bible to be the Word of God, is much disputed, as all questions must needs be, that are not well stated. For they make not the question to be, Why we *Beleeve* it, but, How wee *Know* it; as if Beleeving and Knowing were all one. And thence while one side ground their Knowledge upon the Infallibility of the Church, and the other side, on the Testimony of the Private Spirit, neither side concludeth what it pretends. For how shall a man know the Infallibility of the Church, but by knowing first the Infallibility of the Scripture? Or how shall a man know his own Private spirit to be other than a Presumption of his own Gifts? Besides, there is nothing in the Scripture, from which can be inferred the Infallibility of the Church; much less, of any particular Church; and least of all, the Infallibility of any particular man." *Leviathan*, chap. 43 (405–6). Cf. also *English Works*, 4:339f.

173. See above, n. 154.

174. *Leviathan*, chap. 33; cf. also *Leviathan*, chap. 42 (358f.) and *De cive* 16.12.

175. *Leviathan*, chap. 33 (266).

is appropriate¹⁷⁶—but rather that he considers a falsification fundamentally possible: a falsification of the New Testament by the Christian clergy is fundamentally possible because the New Testament in its currently available form has been attested to only since the Council of Laodicea, i.e., only since a time in which the clergy, estranged from the spirit of the gospel, led the church, and in which “the copies of the Books of the New Testament, were in the hands only of the Ecclesiasticks.”¹⁷⁷ Hobbes arrives at an analogous result as regards the Old Testament: he indeed thinks it certain that, above all, the genuine Book of the Law (i.e., Deuteronomy 11–27) was composed by Moses himself, but he denies decisively that the Pentateuch as a whole could have originated from Moses, or even from one of his contemporaries; and even that Mosaic Book of the Law, as he emphasizes, was lost for a long time and rediscovered only under King Josiah; the historical books of the Old Testament appeared only after the events chronicled in them; the prophets all lived during the captivity or shortly before it; the Old Testament as a whole was compiled in its current form no earlier than the time of Ezra.¹⁷⁸ The writings of both the Old Testament and the New Testament, therefore, being fundamentally exposed to the suspicion of having been falsified and corrupted, and to the suspicion, in particular, that the prophecies were fabricated *ex eventu* [after the fact],¹⁷⁹ we cannot speak of a *knowledge* that we have in the writings before us the documents of revelation.

Even more important than the hidden result of the historical-critical investigation is its tacit presupposition, namely, that the books of Scripture can and must be subjected to a critique in fundamentally the same way as any number of other literary documents. Already in undertaking the historical-critical study as such—entirely irrespective of what results it leads to—Hobbes, who more than ever does not recognize as binding any church or tradition or certainty of faith vouching for the authority of Scripture, makes it understood that he has broken with the belief in the revealed character of Scripture. His unbelief is therefore not the consequence but the presupposition of the historical critique: the proof of the inauthentic character of the biblical writings is only a still further, subsequent confirmation that they

176. “such texts [sc. of the New Testament], wherein is no suspicion of corruption of the Scripture.” *Leviathan*, chap. 34 (278).

177. *Leviathan*, chap. 33 (266).

178. *Leviathan*, chaps. 33 (266) and 42 (357–58).

179. A suggestion in this direction is conveyed by the casual remark that the same warning, justified by the outcome, was given, according to the report in Chronicles, by the idolater Pharaoh Necho and, on the other hand, according to Esdras, by Jeremiah on the basis of a divine pronouncement; see *Leviathan*, chap. 36 (290).

were not revealed. One fully appreciates how little depends on the historical critique for Hobbes if one supposes for a moment that Hobbes could have been convinced by the *authenticity* of the biblical writings:* he would not thereby have been in the least convinced of their *revealed character*. In fact, his historical critique has its basis in a critique, in principle, of revelation generally, and first of all, of the *knowability* of revelation in general.

It is, therefore, not an accident, and it is not merely based on external considerations, that in justifying his claim that there is no genuine knowledge of the revealed character of Scripture, Hobbes does not appeal to the results of his historical critique. He appeals, rather, to the fact that only those men can have knowledge of the revealed character of Scripture to whom God has revealed it through supernatural means. Since, moreover, he rejects the teaching that the revealed character of Scripture is vouched for by the inner testimony of the holy spirit, it is clear that he at any rate disqualifies all men who are not bringers of revelation from the possibility of knowing revelation.¹⁸⁰ He does not deny, rather he emphasizes, that according to Scripture there are established criteria that allow for the distinction between true and false prophets;¹⁸¹ but these criteria naturally have validity only on the presupposition that Scripture is itself revealed. And it is precisely respecting this presupposition that Hobbes denies that it [revelation] is knowable. Because, therefore, revelation is not knowable, legislation based on revelation has for this reason no obligatory power in itself.¹⁸² Hence, the Israelites in particular were obliged not by the command of God but by their own consent and promise to obey the laws proclaimed to them by Moses: Moses had no other, and no greater, authority than any other sovereign.¹⁸³

That Scripture is revealed is therefore not known but only *believed*. But what is there to this belief? Belief is a gift of God, that is certain; but God

* Strauss notes in the margin at this point, without explicitly making a footnote: "And the other way around: according to the premise of verbal inspiration one can deal with every critical difficulty: chosen people of God, unfathomable mysteries, which at the right time, hour will be revealed—Critique can only point to plausibilities: Moses with prophecy could indeed know his grave; cf. *Leviathan* 261 (bottom paragraph)—262 (top paragraph)." —EDS.

180. See above, nn. 168 and 172. Cf. also *Leviathan*, chap. 26 (198), 32 (324), and 33 (261).

181. As regards these criteria, cf. *Leviathan*, chap. 32 (257ff.), as well as the somewhat divergent indications in chap. 36 (298).

182. "He therefore, to whom God hath not supernaturally revealed, that they [sc. the Scriptures] are his, nor that those that published them, were sent by him, is not obliged to obey them, by any Authority, but his, whose Commands have already the force of Laws; that is to say, by any other Authority, then that of the Common-wealth, residing in the Sovereign, who only has the Legislative Power." *Leviathan*, chap. 33 (268).

183. *Leviathan*, chap. 40 (324f.) and 42 (357). Cf. above, p. 46.

gives men belief, not through inspiration or infusion,¹⁸⁴ but through natural means, namely, through their teachers. This means that believing men believe that Scripture is the word of God because they have heard it from their teachers. This belief, therefore, is completely natural: it is an ordinary belief based on hearsay that owes its special but in no way supernatural power simply to the circumstance that men mostly show their first teachers respect. Now, since in Christian states all men are taught, from childhood on, that Scripture is the word of God, it is no wonder that in Christian states all or at any rate most men believe in Scripture, and that in other states only very few do.¹⁸⁵ Therefore, the belief in Scripture is based on a reigning, publicly taught *prejudice*.

Now a prejudice as such must not necessarily be an error. Examination of the prejudice can even lead to the result that the prejudice has accidentally hit upon the truth; in this way the prejudice can be transformed into knowledge. But a transformation of this sort, with respect to the prejudice that Scripture is revealed, is impossible for the reason previously stated. Hence, this prejudice could be legitimated only by being depicted as morally, or practically, worthy of being believed. But even justifications for belief in Scripture of this sort are rejected by Hobbes—at first, through the repeated assertion that there could not be an obligation to believe. There can be no obligation to believe because belief does not depend on human will but is the necessary consequence of certain or probable arguments.¹⁸⁶ And as there is no obligation to believe, so there is no punishment for unbelief. We here disregard the fact that, according to Hobbes's claim, the explicit denial of the belief necessary for salvation, provided that it is commanded by the temporal

184. *Leviathan*, chap. 34, toward the end, chap. 43 (406), and 46 (465).

185. "It is manifest therefore, that Christian men doe not know, but onely believe the Scripture to be the Word of God; and that the means of making them believe which God is pleased to afford men ordinarily, is according to the way of Nature, that is to say, from their Teachers . . . For what other cause can there bee assigned, why in Christian Common-wealths all men either believe, or at least professe the Scripture to bee the Word of God, and in other Common-wealths scarce any; but that in Christian Common-wealths they are taught it from their infancy; and in other places they are taught otherwise?" *Leviathan*, chap. 43 (406). "By the Writings of the Fathers . . . we may find, that the Books wee now have of the New Testament, were held by the Christians of that time . . . for the dictates of the Holy Ghost . . . such was the reverence and opinion they had of their Teachers; as generally the reverence that the Disciples bear to their first Masters, in all manner of doctrine they receive from them, is not small." *Leviathan*, chap. 42 (359). Cf. also n. 168 above and n. 191 below, as well as *Leviathan*, chap. 7, toward the end.

186. "Faith hath no relation to, nor dependence at all upon Compulsion, or Commandement; but onely upon certainty, or probability of Arguments drawn from Reason, or from something men beleeve already." *Leviathan*, chap. 42 (342). Cf. also *Leviathan*, chap. 32 (255f.).

power and is not attended by inner denial, has no adverse consequences for the denier at all;¹⁸⁷ in any case, in the context of his critique on the basis of Scripture, Hobbes holds firmly that damnation follows from unbelief. But already in this connection, he replaces eternal punishment in hell with resurrection to a renewed, as well as a finite and sensible, existence; the actual punishment of the damned consists in their having before their eyes the eternal, insensible happiness of the elect, from which they are excluded because of their unbelief.¹⁸⁸ But is this punishment so terrible that fear of it would make one believe?¹⁸⁹ And is eternal happiness, which is only negatively defined by Hobbes,¹⁹⁰ which is thus characterized as freedom from want, unhappiness, and death, but also as freedom from—and therefore the incapacity for—any enjoyment of the senses, an object of envy for the damned? Not in any case for Hobbes, who acknowledges as genuine only the goods of the senses. But completely apart from this, the belief in eternal happiness and damnation is itself based on Scripture;¹⁹¹ hence, the reminder that unbelief is punished with eternal damnation has no influence at all on those who do not believe in Scripture. Hobbes denies explicitly, however, not merely any obligation to believe; he denies, in essence [*der Sache nach*], not merely any punishment of unbelief; he denies also, and above all, that there is any meaningful deference of reason to revelation. This is all the more striking, since he is far from claiming the sufficiency of reason for answering all principal

187. See above, p. 65.

188. See above, p. 43.

189. "upon a Christian, that should become an Apostate, in a place where the Civill Power did persecute, or not assist the Church, the effect of Excommunication had nothing in it, neither of dammage in this world, nor of terrour: Not of terrour, because of their unbeleef; nor of dammage, because they returned thereby into the favour of the world; and in the world to come, were to be in no worse estate, then they which never had beleaved." *Leviathan*, chap. 42 (350). "nor is there here [sc. in the story of the Fall] any punishment but only a reducing of Adam and Eve to their original mortality, where death was no punishment but a gift of God. In which mortality he lived near a thousand years, and had a numerous issue, and lived *without misery*, and I believe shall at the resurrection obtain the immortality which then he lost." *English Works*, 5:102f. Cf. also the remark of Bishop Bramhall: "It is to be presumed, that in those their second lives, knowing certainly from T.H. that there is no hope of redemption for them from corporal death upon their well-doing, nor fear of any torments after death for their ill-doing, they [sc. the reprobates] will pass their times here as pleasantly as they can. This is all the damnation which T.H. fancieth." *English Works*, 4:359.

190. Cf., inter alia, the denial of the possibility of a *visio beatifica* [beatific vision], in *Leviathan*, chap. 6, toward the end, as well as *English Works*, 4:347.

191. "there is no naturall knowledge of mans estate after death; . . . but onely a beliefe grounded upon other mens saying, that they know it supernaturally, or that they know those, that knew them, that knew others, that knew it supernaturally." *Leviathan*, chap. 15 (103).

questions, and in particular for knowledge of God. Accordingly, he had even said in *De cive* that without the special assistance of God, men can hardly avoid the cliffs of both atheism and superstition.¹⁹² But this passage from *De cive* has no counterpart at all in *Leviathan*. In consideration of the general relation between *De cive* and *Leviathan* characterized above,¹⁹³ the statement quoted from *De cive* thereby proves to be a mere accommodation. The sole reminder of reason's deference to revelation to be found in *Leviathan* is the remark, following the Pauline teaching of justification, that the fulfillment of the natural moral law, which is knowable by reason, does not suffice for man's justification because, and only because, man is not capable of completely fulfilling that law: hence in order to be just, man requires, besides obedience, also forgiveness of sin, which, however, is granted to him only as a reward for his belief.¹⁹⁴ Man is therefore incapable of completely fulfilling the moral law; the utmost that is possible for him is the serious effort to fulfill that law; God accepts this effort, this will, in place of the deed *only from the believers*.¹⁹⁵ But this concession to the traditional teaching is taken back by Hobbes in the same breath so to speak: in the same chapter of *Leviathan* in which he makes this concession, he explains twice that God takes the will for the deed *among all men*.¹⁹⁶ whoever makes an honest effort to fulfill the moral law is precisely for this reason just. This latter claim alone corresponds to Hobbes's real conviction, as he expressed it in the context of his rational political science, which has no regard for revelation at all.¹⁹⁷ If, therefore, man is able not only to know the rules of the natural moral law with his natural powers, but also to *be* just, man must in no way be dependent on a justifying belief, and therefore on revelation. Therefore, not only does Hobbes not believe in revelation, he does not have any cause whatsoever for believing in revelation.

If Hobbes does not believe in revelation, and therefore also does not believe in Scripture, he has no reason to submit himself to any teaching vouched for only by Scripture and not by reason. We thus now know what we have to

192. *De cive* 16.1. With this passage Hobbes introduces the discussion of revealed religion.

193. See p. 30. above

194. Cf. above, p. 51.

195. "God accepteth not the Will for the Deed, but onely in the Faithfull." *Leviathan*, chap. 43 (413).

196. "the Will, which God doth alwaies accept for the Work it selfe, as well in good, as in evill men." Ibid. (413). "God . . . accepteth in all our actions the Will for the Deed." Ibid. (404).

197. Cf., e.g., *Leviathan*, chap. 15 (97): "The Lawes [sc. of nature], because they oblige onely to a desire, and endeavour, I mean an unfeigned and constant endeavour; he that endeavoureth their performance, fulfilleth them; and he that fulfilleth the Law, is just."

think of his assurances in all cases in which Hobbes acknowledges a teaching simply because it is contained in Scripture. Hence, there can in particular be no doubt that Hobbes did not believe in original sin and salvation, in future rewards and punishments, in the resurrection of bodies, in the existence of angels, etc. By making it clear enough that he questioned the credibility of Scripture as such, he spared himself the necessity of explicitly denying those teachings, vouched for by Scripture alone, and thus of having to show himself any more vulnerable in the eyes of his believing opponents than he at any rate had already done. Directly on the basis of the fundamental transformation of the *belief* that Scripture is revealed into the mere *concession* that Scripture is revealed,¹⁹⁸ he could, arguing *ad hominem*, indulge with reassuring extensiveness in biblical quotations and theological locutions, and thereby continually lead readers astray about his unbelief.

Hobbes, therefore, does not need to explicitly reject those teachings which he explicitly says are vouched for only by Scripture, since, through this explanation, he has in fact rejected them already. He nevertheless did not think it superfluous to at least indicate his denial of those teachings. According to his claim, the central teaching of Scripture, not vouched for by reason, is determined by the pronouncement that men (elected to this end) will live just like, or similarly to, the angels after the resurrection. In the connection that according to Hobbes therefore exists between the belief in angels and the belief in the resurrection, the questioning of one belief suffices to raise suspicion about the other. Hobbes does indeed pretend that he believes in angels, being compelled to do so by clear passages in the New Testament; but that he does *not* in truth believe in angels the text shows, even in that passage in which he formally acknowledges the existence of angels: he makes it understood there that it is much more plausible to assume that angels are only products of human fantasy.¹⁹⁹ Hobbes indicates what the close connection between the denial of angels and the denial of the resurrection is by noting in passing, in another passage, that the Sadducees rightly found no basis for the belief in angels in the Old Testament.²⁰⁰ If the Sadducees are right in this respect, must one not ultimately agree with their denial of the resurrec-

198. See above, n. 171.

199. See above, n. 53.

200. "the Jews . . . , without any thing in the Old Testament that constrained them thereunto, had generally an opinion, (except the sect of the Sadducees,) that those apparitions [sc. Angels and Daemons] . . . were substances, not dependent on the fancy, but permanent creatures of God." *Leviathan*, chap. 34 (275).

tion, of the future life? No, Hobbes does *not* agree with them; for he knows only too well how dangerous such an agreement would be: by denying not only the existence of angels and demons but also the existence of spirits in general (and thereby the future life), the Sadducees came suspiciously close to atheism.²⁰¹ And why deny the existence of spirits, naturally of corporeal spirits—for speech about incorporeal spirits is absurd—and expose oneself to the suspicion of atheism? Are not the air and many other invisible bodies corporeal spirits? And does not the body of man become invisible after death in the course of decay? And is not, therefore, the resurrection of the crude, visible body in the form of a fine, invisible, “spiritual” body easy to understand and therefore to believe?²⁰²

b. The Knowability and the Possibility of Revelation

The core of the critique of Scripture discussed so far is the proposition that revelation as such is not *knowable*. This critique calls into question, although not directly and explicitly but indirectly and tacitly, also the possibility (and therefore also the reality) of revelation; for what meaning does a revelation have, i.e., a revelation of a law or a gospel, that is knowable only to the bringer of revelation as such! Still, the critique of the knowability of revelation is inadequate for the complete shaking of the authority of revelation. Through this critique, surely that man who wishes to rely on his own sensible experience and rational reflection alone can *defend* himself against all demands resting allegedly or really on revelation; for the reality of revelation cannot be fundamentally shown to be coherent with his experience through the senses and rational reflection and to be in accord with them. But he cannot, on the basis of this critique, *attack* those who, allegedly or actually instructed by divine illumination about the reality of revelation, about the revealed character

201. “the Sadducees . . . erred so farre on the other hand, as not to believe there were at all any spirits, (which is very neere to direct Atheisme).” *Leviathan*, chap. 8 (57–58).

202. “And where St. Paul saies, We shall rise spirituall Bodies, he acknowledgeth the nature of Spirits, but that they are Bodily Spirits; which is not difficult to understand. For Air and many other things are Bodies, though not Flesh and Bone, or any other grosse body, to bee discerned by the eye.” *Leviathan*, chap. 45 (442). “men, that are otherwise employed, then to search into their causes [i.e., of those Idols of the brain], know not of themselves, what to call them; and may therefore easily be perswaded, by those whose knowledge they much reverence, some to call them *Bodies*, and think them made of aire compacted by a power supernaturall, because the sight judges them corporeall; and some to call them *Spirits*, because the sense of Touch discerneth nothing in the place where they appear, to resist their fingers.” *Leviathan*, chap. 34 (270).

of Scripture, believe in the revealed character of Scripture; he cannot even lead these believers astray from their attack on him and his like. Hence, Hobbes is compelled to question not only the knowability but also the *possibility* of revelation.²⁰³

He does not deny the possibility of revelation *expressis verbis* [in express words]; he contents himself with showing that revelation, understood in the literal sense, or according to the constructions of the theologians, is impossible, and with indicating how he himself explains revelation. Since this explanation, however, denies revelation not only its supernatural character but even all worth, it is clear that the reason concealed by Hobbes for his unbelieving explanation of "revelation" is the denial of the possibility of revelation. He does not express this denial; he does no more than *lead* the reader to it. As with his critique of the tradition, he begins with a purely exegetical investigation, "granting" the revealed character of Scripture:²⁰⁴ he wants to ascertain what Scripture itself understands by "the word of God" so he can then decide whether and in what sense Scripture itself permits or demands the conception of Scripture as the word of God.²⁰⁵ In carrying out this exegetical investigation, an erosion of the initially presupposed belief in revelation takes place so that the principal critique, which follows from or is included in the exegesis, needs only to give this belief its coup de grâce.

The allegedly purely exegetical investigation leads to the following result. There are two classes of people to whom God has directly spoken supernaturally: the sovereign prophets of perpetual calling (i.e., Moses, the high priests, and the pious kings in the Old Testament, Christ in the New Testament), and the extraordinary prophets (e.g., the patriarchs, Samuel, Elijah, and the prophets of Scripture). How God has spoken to the former is not known and is not intelligible.²⁰⁶ God has spoken to the extraordinary prophets by means of dreams and visions, i.e., through imaginings that they had in sleep or in an ecstasy; and these imaginings, in the case of true prophets, are indeed supernatural but, in the case of false prophets, are either natural or fabricated.²⁰⁷ All prophecy presupposes, therefore, either a dream or a vision, or some special gift from God. Now these gifts, as well as the most

203. Cf. in this connection *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, 144f. and 204ff.

204. See n. 171 above.

205. See *Leviathan*, chap. 36.

206. *Leviathan*, chap. 36 (295).

207. "and [should be "so that generally"] the prophets extraordinary in the Old Testament took notice of the Word of God no otherwise, than from their Dreams, or Visions; that is to say, from the imaginations which they had in their sleep, or in an Exstasie: which imaginations in every true Prophet were supernaturall; but in false Prophets were either naturall, or feigned."

extraordinary dreams and visions, can come about very easily in a natural manner; and since the supernatural origin of the dreams and visions is in any case the essential condition of the true extraordinary prophecy, one requires the greatest circumspection and caution if one is not to be deceived by false prophets—i.e., by prophets whose dreams and visions have a natural origin. Mistrust is commanded all the more as the claim of a man to be a prophet includes in each case a claim to leadership and rule; and since all men strive by nature after leadership and rule, every man who claims to be a prophet is from the outset suspected of having engaged in deception out of ambition. Hence, it is no wonder that Scripture warns us against prophets, that in the New Testament, in particular, so much is preached against prophets. But what use is all circumspection and caution if even the extraordinary dreams and visions can have a natural origin, and therefore supernatural dreams and visions, as such, are never knowable? Here Scripture, which makes available the criteria for distinguishing true from false prophets, comes to our aid. According to these criteria, the sovereign prophet is a judge over all other prophets. It is therefore the obligation of every man to become clear about who the sovereign prophet is, that is, who the sovereign is; for the sovereign alone can distinguish authoritatively between true and false prophets.²⁰⁸

Leviathan, chap. 36 (294). "All which ways [i.e., whereby God declared his Will in the Old Testament] he also used in the New Testament." *Ibid.* (297).

208. "Seeing then all Prophecy supposeth Vision or Dream, . . . or some especial gift of God, so rarely observed in mankind, as to be admired where observed. And seeing as well such gifts, as the most extraordinary Dreams, and Visions may proceed from God, not onely by His supernaturall, and immediate, but also by his naturall operation, and by mediation of second causes; there is need of Reason and Judgement to discern between naturall and supernaturall Gifts, and between naturall and supernaturall Visions, or Dreams. And consequently men had need to be very circumspect, and wary, in obeying the voice of man that, pretending himself to be a prophet, requires us to obey God in that way, which he in Gods name telleth us to be the way to happinesse. For he that pretends to teach men the way of so great felicity, pretends to govern them; that is to say, to rule, and reign over them; which is a thing that all men naturally desire, and is therefore worthy to be suspected of Ambition and Imposture; and consequently ought to be examined, and tryed by every man, before hee yeeld them obedience; unless he have yeelded it them already, in the institution of a Common-wealth, as when the Prophet is the Civil Sovereign, or by the Civil Sovereign Authorized . . . seeing there is . . . so much Preaching in the New Testament against Prophets; and so much greater a number ordinarily of false Prophets, then of true; every one is to beware of obeying their directions at their own perill . . . Every man . . . is bound to make use of his Naturall Reason to apply to all prophecy those Rules which God hath given us, to discern the true from the false . . . Every man therefore ought to consider who is the Sovereign Prophet; that is to say, who it is, that is Gods Viceregent on Earth and hath next under God, the authority of Governing Christian men; and to observe for a rule, that Doctrine, which, in the name of God, hee hath commanded to bee taught; and thereby to examine and

The tacit presupposition of this result is the denial of any inner distinction between true and false prophets. Hobbes, characteristically, does not make this distinction at all with respect to the sovereign prophets: what the sovereign prophets, i.e., the sovereigns, command is to be followed without examination by the subjects. And concerning the prophecies of the extraordinary prophets, i.e., of those that are neither sovereign nor appointed by the sovereign, they are altogether either natural dreams or simply fabricated and are therefore in either case false: all prophets about whom a judgment on the part of a private person is permissible—in truth, therefore, all prophets simply²⁰⁹—are false prophets, deceived or deceivers, mentally ill or liars. Hobbes expressed this, his actual view, in a few passages as clearly as possible.²¹⁰

The presupposition of this denial of prophecy is the conviction that prophecy in itself is impossible. Prophecy is impossible because it is impossible that God *speaks*. God's infinity, invisibility, and incomprehensibility exclude God's having spoken in the literal sense, i.e., by means of speech organs, just as much as his having appeared to prophets. "God has spoken to prophets" can therefore only mean that God has declared his will to a prophet in a certain way.²¹¹ God can declare his will just as much naturally as supernaturally. The former takes place when men, by reason of the powers that belong to them by nature, attain knowledge of the natural moral law; that God can

try out the truth of those Doctrines, which pretended Prophets with miracle, or without, shall at any time advance." *Leviathan*, chap. 36 (297ff.). Cf., in this connection, Hobbes's remarkable defense: "I never said that princes can make doctrines or prophesies true or false; but I say every sovereign prince has a right to prohibit the public teaching of them, whether false or true." *English Works*, 4:329.

209. For only the *profession* of belief, not the belief itself, can be subject to the judgment of authority; cf. *Leviathan*, chap. 37, end.

210. "the dreams and prognostications of madmen (for such I take to be *all* those that foretell future consequences)." *Behemoth*, 188. "if men were at liberty, to take for Gods Commandements, their own dreams, and fancies, or the dreams and fancies of private men; scarce two men would agree upon what is Gods Commandement." *Leviathan*, chap. 26 (199). Cf. moreover *Leviathan*, chap. 36, end, *English Works*, 4:327f., and *Behemoth*, 21f. ("the Pope did concerning the Scriptures the same that Moses did concerning Mount Sinai").

211. "a question may be asked, in what manner God speaketh to such a Prophet. Can it (may some say) be properly said, that God hath voice and language, when it cannot be properly said, he hath a tongue, or other organs, as a man? . . . Therefore we are to interpret Gods speaking to men immediately, for that way (whatsoever it be), by which God makes them understand his will." *Leviathan*, chap. 36 (292 [f.]). "To say God spake or appeared as he is in his own nature, is to deny his Infiniteness, Invisibility, Incomprehensibility." *Ibid.* (295).

"speak" in this manner is not subject to doubt.²¹² But how should one understand the direct, supernatural communication of divine will, which, according to the conception of Scripture and the tradition, should be characteristic of prophecy? It is in fact fully unintelligible. One characterizes it perhaps as "inspiration." *Inspiratio* comes from *spiritus*. Now if there are no spirits, that is, no incorporeal substances, then there is also no inspiration.²¹³

With the rejection of the theory of inspiration or of other theories of this kind, however, nothing is decided concerning the possibility of revelation.²¹⁴ If God is omnipotent and incomprehensible, one can indeed prove that human statements about God's activity are *absurd*, but one can never refute the claim that God's activity is carried out in a manner fully *incomprehensible* to man,²¹⁵ that God therefore in particular brings forth, in a fully incomprehensible, supernatural manner, dreams and visions that, in contrast to the natural products of the imagination, have as their purpose and content the divine guidance of man. In other words, as long as the presupposition of the incomprehensible omnipotence of God, as long as the possibility of miracles is not shaken, the impossibility of prophecy and revelation has not been proven. The critique of revelation leads further, therefore, to a critique of miracles: *the critique of miracles is the center of the critique of religion*.²¹⁶

c. The Knowability and the Possibility of Miracles

Hobbes proceeds in his critique of miracles in fundamentally the same way as in his critique of prophecy. In this case too, he leaves belief in Scripture unchallenged in appearance; in appearance it is sufficient for him, while invoking Scripture, to warn against belief in false miracles and vindicate for the temporal power the authoritative decision as to whether a certain occurrence is natural or supernatural. The presupposition of this result is the tacit

212. Ibid. (295).

213. *Leviathan*, chap. 34, end.

214. "the voice of God in a Dream, or Vision supernaturall . . . is not Inspiration." *Leviathan*, chap. 34 (279).

215. "When the nature of the thing is incomprehensible, I can acquiesce in the Scripture: but when the signification of words is incomprehensible, I cannot acquiesce in the authority of a Schoolman." *English Works*, 4:314 [*An Answer to a Book Published by Dr. Bramhall, late bishop of Derry, called the "Catching of Leviathan," together with an Historical Narration Concerning Heresey, and the Punishment Thereof*].

216. See Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, 212ff.

denial of miracles. Hobbes explicitly contests the reality of miracles in the present, even those reported by the Church Fathers.²¹⁷ With regard to the biblical miracles, he must proceed more cautiously. He teaches with complete openness only that miracles are generally *very difficult to establish*. An essential condition of a miracle is that it occurs by the prayer, i.e., by the word, of a man.²¹⁸ At first glance, therefore, every miracle has a striking resemblance to the works of magic, sorcery, and witchcraft, i.e., to manifestly deceptive arts; for all these arts presuppose that words can have an effect on inanimate objects, or on living things that lack reason, which is manifestly impossible.²¹⁹ And in particular it appears that the works of the Egyptian sorcerers, for instance, were the equivalent of Moses' miracles, that no essential difference between the works of sorcerers, on the one hand, and miracles, on the other hand, is recognizable.²²⁰ In any case, the distinction between miracle and deception is in every particular case so difficult that the judgment as to whether a miracle is present or not must in practice be ceded to the arbitrariness of the individual, or rather, to the decree of the temporal power.²²¹ Hobbes goes further. Relying on Scripture, he claims that miracles are knowable only to the elect.²²² With this, however, he says that *miracles are fundamentally not knowable to natural reason*. It may therefore be very difficult, it may even

217. See n. 37 above and n. 243 below.

218. "For how admirable soever any work be, the Admiration consisteth not in that it could be done, because men naturally believe the Almighty can doe all things, but because he does it at the Prayer, or Word of a Man." *Leviathan*, chap. 37 (301–2).

219. "There be some texts of Scripture that seem to attribute the power of working wonders (equal to some of those immediate miracles, wrought by God himself,) to certain arts of magic and incantation . . . Enchantment [is] not, as many think it, a working of strange effects by spells, and words; but Imposture, and delusion, wrought by ordinary means . . . For it is evident enough, that Words have no effect, but on those that understand them; and then they have no other, but to signify the intentions, or passions of them that speak; and thereby produce hope, fear, or other passions, or conceptions in the hearer." *Leviathan*, chap. 37 (303–4).

220. "the works of the Egyptian Sorcerers, though not so great as those of Moses, yet were great miracles." *Leviathan*, chap. 32 (258). Cf. also *Leviathan*, chap. 37 (303).

221. "the thing they pretend to be a Miracle, we must both see it done, and use all means possible to consider, whether it be really done; and not onely so, but whether it be such, as no man can do the like by his natural power, but that it requires the immediate hand of God. And in this also we must have recourse to Gods Lieutenant; to whom in all doubtful cases, wee have submitted our private judgments." *Leviathan*, chap. 37 (305). "A private man has always the liberty, (because thought is free), to beleeve, or not beleeve in his heart, those acts that have been given out for Miracles . . . But when it comes to confession of that faith, the Private Reason must submit to the Publique." *Ibid.* (306).

222. "the end of Miracles, was to beget beleeve, not universally in all men, elect, and reprobate; but in the elect only; . . . So also of our Saviour, it is written, (Mat. 13.58) that he wrought

be impossible, to *imagine* the natural causes of a miracle;²²³ a true *knowledge* of whether a miracle is present can in no case be attained. But Hobbes cannot rest satisfied with this result that is a sufficient defense of unbelief against a revelation that is miraculous in itself and is even vouched for by miracles. In order to defeat belief in revelation, in order that the believers in revelation may be led astray in their belief, he must demonstrate not only the unknowability but also the impossibility of miracles.

To prove the impossibility of miracles—this means, however, to prove that *God* cannot do or cannot want to do miracles. This proof therefore presupposes that any scientific statements about God are possible. Natural reason is doubtless capable of the knowledge that there is a first and eternal cause of all things, in other words, that God is eternal, infinite, and omnipotent.²²⁴ But is it possible to conclude anything whatsoever, from these attributes, about the possibility or impossibility of miracles? From the infinity, and therewith the incomprehensibility, of God it perhaps follows that God cannot, in a genuine sense, speak or appear;²²⁵ but it in no way follows that he cannot “speak” or “appear” in supernatural dreams or visions. Correspondingly, it follows from God’s eternity that his will must be unchangeable, that therefore no creature can have an effect on him through prayer or the like; and hence miracles, if they were the works to which God is moved by prayer on the part of men, would certainly be impossible; the meaning of the traditional claim of miracles, however, is not, as Hobbes knows and

not many Miracles in his own countrey, because of their unbelief; and (in Marke 6.5.) in stead of, he wrought not many, it is, he could work none.” *Leviathan*, chap. 37 (302).

223. “To understand therefore what is a Miracle, we must first understand what works they are, which men wonder at, and call Admirable. And there be but two things which make men wonder at any event: The one is, if it be strange, that is to say, such, as the like of it hath never, or very rarely been produced: The other is, if when it is produced, we cannot *imagine* it to have been done by naturall means, but onely by the immediate hand of God. But when wee see some *possible*, naturall cause of it, how rarely soever the like has been done; or if the like have been often done, how impossible soever it be to *imagine* a naturall means thereof, we no more wonder, nor esteeme it for a Miracle. Therefore, if a Horse, or Cow should speak, it were a Miracle; because both the thing is strange, & the Naturall cause *difficult* to *imagin*: So also were it, to see a strange deviation of nature, in the production of some new shape of a living creature. But when a man, or other Animal, engenders his like, though *we know no more how this is done, than the other*; yet because ’tis usuall, it is no Miracle. In like manner, if a man be metamorphosed into a stone, or into a pillar, it is a Miracle; because strange: but if a peece of wood be so changed; because we see it often, it is no Miracle: and yet *we know no more, by what operation of God, the one is brought to passe, than the other*.” *Leviathan*, chap. 37 (300–301).

224. *Leviathan*, chap. 12 (77).

225. See n. 211 above.

acknowledges, that prayers are the reason for God's willing and doing miracles, but the reverse: that the eternal will of God is the reason for the prayers, as well as for both the miracles and the sequence of the two.²²⁶ And furthermore, the eternity of God does indeed contradict an alteration in his will, but it in no way contradicts an eternal resolution to allow an alteration to come to pass at this or that point in time.²²⁷ Therefore, from the attributes of God that are knowable through natural reason, there follows, in the first instance, nothing against the possibility of miracles; what follows from them, rather, is the decisive proof against the impossibility, and hence for the possibility, of miracles: because God is omnipotent, miracles are necessarily possible.²²⁸ God *can* therefore do miracles. The other question, however, whether God *wants* or can want to do miracles, cannot be answered by finite human reason, to which any insight into the will of God is denied. Hence, one must renounce a demonstration of the impossibility of miracles. This renunciation need not be a difficulty for Hobbes since all that matters to him is to prevent his revelation-believing opponents from their appeal to miracles (which are allegedly made knowable to them through faith). Under

226. "though prayer be none of the causes that move God's will, his will being unchangeable, yet since we find in God's word, he will not give his blessings but to those that ask them, the motive to prayer is the same . . . the prayer is decreed together in the same decree wherein the blessing is decreed." *English Works*, 5:200 [*Questions Concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance, clearly stated and debated between Dr. Bramhall, bishop of Derry, and Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*]. "God is not moved by any thing that we do, but has always one and the same eternal purpose, to do the same things that from eternity he hath foreknown shall be done . . . no man nor creature living can work any effect upon God." *English Works*, 5:220f. [*Questions Concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance*]. Cf., in this connection, n. 218 above.

227. "It is true, that God doth not all things that he can do if he will; but that he can *will* that which he hath not *willed* from all eternity, I deny; unless that he can not only *will a change*, but also *change his will*, which all divines says is immutable." *English Works*, 5:246 [*Questions Concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance*]. Cf., in this connection, Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* 1.16.7: "voluntas Dei est omnino immutabilis. Sed circa hoc considerandum est quod aliud est mutare voluntatem, et aliud est velle aliquarum rerum mutationem. Potest enim aliquis eadem voluntate immobiliter permanente velle quod nunc fiat hoc, et postea fiat contrarium." [The will of God is entirely unchangeable. On this point we must consider that to change the will is one thing; to will that certain things should be changed is another. It is possible to will a thing to be done now, and its contrary afterwards.]

228. "Impossible in themselves are contradictions only, as to be and not to be at the same time, which the divines say is not possible to God. All other things are possible at least in themselves. Raising from the dead, changing the course of nature, making of a new heaven, and a new earth, are things possible in themselves; for there is nothing in their nature able to resist the will of God." *English Works*, 5:176. "there is no doubt, but God can make unnatural Apparitions . . . the stay, or change, of the course of Nature, which he also can stay, and change." *Leviathan*, chap. 2 (19f.).

these circumstances, the desired goal that still remains after the proof that miracles are not knowable for natural reason is only to prove that miracles are also *unknowable for faith*.

The discussion of miracles is based on the distinction between supernatural works of God and natural occurrences. Now this distinction is impossible precisely on the presupposition of faith. For according to this presupposition, God can do freely all that he wants, and therefore, in particular, all the miracles of which Scripture tells; but then all natural occurrences are also just as incomprehensible as miracles, since they are caused by the omnipotent God whose doing is simply incomprehensible.²²⁹ If *all* occurrences, whether natural or miraculous, are incomprehensible, the sole criterion for distinguishing between miracles and nonmiracles remains their striking character: miracles are those incomprehensible occurrences that are striking.²³⁰ What is striking, however, is different for different men.²³¹ A universally valid distinction between miracles and what is natural, a truthful knowledge of miracles, is not possible on the presupposition of belief, precisely *because* God is omnipotent.

Hobbes is enabled to attack revelation, or, more precisely, to attack *men*²³² who believe in revelation, simply through the demonstration that miracles are not knowable for believers. To come to this result, he must, taking over the presupposition of his opponents, argue on the basis of belief in the omnipotence of God. Arguing in this *ad hominem* manner, he is compelled to negate the possibility of natural knowledge. That this negation does not correspond to Hobbes's real view hardly needs proof: almost at the same moment in which he explains that all natural occurrences are wholly unintelligible, he speaks of the possibility of his knowledge as something self-evident.²³³ It is precisely in this way that he reveals the genuine presupposition of his critique of miracles. He is perfectly clear that the possibility of miracles cannot be directly refuted, that with the acknowledgment of God's existence, indeed even of the possibility of God's existence, one allows for the possibility of God's omnipotence, and thereby for the possibility of

229. See n. 223 above.

230. See nn. 218 and 223 above.

231. "The first Rainbow that was seen in the world, was a Miracle, because the first; and consequently strange . . . But at this day, because they are frequent, they are not Miracles, neither to them that know their naturall causes, nor to them who know them not." *Leviathan*, chap. 37 (301). "Miracles are Marvellous workes: but that which is marvelous to one, may not be so to another." *Leviathan*, chap. 26 (198).

232. Cf. n. 215 above.

233. See, e.g., n. 231 above.

miracles. The possibility of miracles is to be refuted not directly but only on the basis of its consequences. From the possibility of miracles, or from the omnipotence of God that this possibility presupposes, there follows the impossibility of natural knowledge, the justification of all kinds of superstition;²³⁴ but this consequence is manifestly absurd. The manifest possibility of natural knowledge puts the assertion that there are miracles to shame.

This finding is important enough because it shows that Hobbes himself had no reason for regarding natural science as impossible, and that his skepticism regarding natural science is *at first* only the consequence of a concession to his opponents. But this is not at all to say that this skepticism, which was at first only imposed from without, does not *become* an integral element of Hobbesian thought. And in fact it does become one: Hobbes's idea of natural science can be radically understood only on the basis of his critique of miracles. At any rate, the critique of religion is in this sense the presupposition of his science.

The problematic character of this procedure comes to the fore as soon as one considers that what Hobbes intends as a radical critique of miracles leads only to Calvin's teaching on miracles.²³⁵ This means that Hobbes's critique

234. "For it is not enough to say, God can transubstantiate the Bread into Christs Body: For the Gentiles also held God to be omnipotent; and might upon that ground no lesse excuse their Idolatry, by pretending, as well as others, a transubstantiation of their Wood, and Stone into God Almighty." *Leviathan*, chap. 45 (451). "Whatsoever [Aristotle] says is impossible in nature, they can prove well enough to be possible, from the Almighty power of God, who can make many bodies to be in one and the self-same place, and one body to be in many places at the same time, if the doctrine of transubstantiation require it, though Aristotle deny it." *Behemoth*, 42.

235. See in this connection Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, 195ff. In terms of the valid consideration that G. Krüger raises (in *Die Deutsche Literaturzeitung* 1931, col. 241 [see the English translation in *Independent Journal of Philosophy* 5/6 (1988): 173–75]) against the presentation given in the book mentioned above, it must be said: the revocation [*Aufhebung*] of the special status of miracles, the denial of an essential difference between miracles and nature, is in Calvin only a final, if necessary, outcome; according to Calvin, the idea of nature as an intelligible order, the idea of *providentia universalis* [general providence], is a self-evident presupposition, guaranteed by natural reason, of the teaching of *providentia specialis* [particular providence] that is proper to the believer. But in treating this idea *merely* as a self-evident presupposition, and when polemicalizing against scholasticism (and at bottom less against the content of the scholastic doctrine of providence than against the "carnal," theoretical outlook that he believed he recognized in it), in shifting the emphasis unambiguously to *providentia specialis*, Calvin came to regard the *inequalis diversitas* of natural events (which shows more unambiguously *providentia specialis*) as more important than a *Deo positus* ordo, and finally to understand natural events also from the extreme case of *providentia specialis*, which is the miracle, and hence to deny the distinguishability of miracles from nature. Only, but, certainly as to this result does Hobbes agree with Calvin. [This footnote was deleted by Strauss.—EDS.]

of miracles at most makes questionable the scholastic teaching on miracles, according to which there is a fundamental difference between miracles and nature; it in no way extends to revealed religion as such. This fundamental failure of his critique of religion does not come to Hobbes's awareness because his apparent success brings him, at first, into an apparently hopeless situation, a situation of such a kind that he can believe that in being freed from it, he has once and for all put revealed religion behind him.

By placing himself on the ground of belief in the omnipotence of God, Hobbes abandons at the outset the only ground on which a critique of religion is possible. In order even to be able to attack revealed religion, Hobbes must draw the following conclusion from his opponents' presupposition: that everything which is has its ground in the incomprehensible works of God, that therefore there is *nothing* to comprehend; he must thus deny himself, from the outset, any possibility of comprehending *anything whatsoever*. In other words, in order to refute his opponents, he moves from the presupposition of his opponents further to the complete abandonment of the idea of *nature* as a *comprehensible order*.²³⁶ For only if this idea becomes meaningless will the absolute indistinguishability between miracles and nature, the absolute unknowability of miracles, become inevitable. Hobbes makes questionable, *at the same time*, revealed religion and natural reason. How can he liberate himself from this predicament, from this situation that seems completely hopeless?

He liberates himself from this situation, and at the same time from the power that brought him into this situation, by withdrawing to a dimension that is removed from the grip of God (and of a God who is thus not in fact *omnipotent*, or rather, who does not make full use of his omnipotence). This dimension is the world of *consciousness*, that is, a world that is as much of the material that is given to him as of principles freely created by him. God may dispose of nature as he wants; in the extreme case, he could even annihilate it, but insofar as *I* alone remain, my representations of nature remain, and with them the material and basis of science. This material takes the form of science in being developed according to principles that we ourselves create at will, which principles are thus to a higher degree in our power than are the representations (which remain even through the fictitious destruction of the world): even if nature is annihilated, the possibility of science would survive so long as *I* survive, and insofar as the material of science (the ideas given to us), as well as its form (the principles of knowledge created by us), are

236. See the previous note. [This footnote was deleted by Strauss.—EDS.]

in our power.²³⁷ But the possibility of a genuine natural science has not yet thereby been vouched for. For the causes of natural things that are sought for by this science are not perceptible, and therefore do not belong to the world of our ideas, nor are they created by us in the way in which the principles of knowledge are; they are, therefore, in no sense within our power, but are simply within God's power. Since nature, as created by an omnipotent God, is beyond our grasp, natural science is possible only in this way, that, starting from the ideas given to us in accord with the principles of knowledge that we ourselves create, we arrive at the *possible* causes of natural things in terms of these principles, without our ever being able to know, or needing to know, whether the causes that we assume are possible are the real ones.²³⁸

237. "Doctrinae naturalis exordium, optime . . . a privatione, id est, a ficta universi sublatione, capiemus. Supposita autem tali rerum annihilatione, quaeret fortasse aliquis, quid reliquum esset, de quo homo aliquis (quem ab hoc universo rerum interitu unicum excipimus) philosophari, vel omnino ratiocinari, vel cui rei omen aliquod ratiocinandi causa imponere posset. Dico igitur, remansuras illi homini, mundi et corporum omnium, quae, ante sublationem eorum oculis aspexerat, vel aliis sensibus perceperat, *ideas*, . . . His itaque nomina imponeret, haec substraheret et componeret." ["In the teaching of natural philosophy, I cannot begin better . . . than from *privation*; that is, from feigning the world to be annihilated. But, if such annihilation of all things be supposed, it may perhaps be asked, what would remain for any man (whom only I except from the universal annihilation of things) to consider as the subject of philosophy, or at all to reason upon; or what to give names unto for ratiocination's sake. I say, therefore, there would remain to that man ideas of the world, and of all such bodies as he had, before their annihilation, seen with his eyes, or perceived by any other sense, . . . And these are the things to which he would give names, and subtract them from, and compound them with one another."] *De corpore* 7.1. [*English Works*, 1: 91–92.] Cf. also nn. 238 and 283 below.

238. "ob hanc rem, quod figuras *nos ipsi creamus*, contigit geometriam haberi et esse demonstrabilem. Contra, quia rerum naturalium causae *in nostra potestate sunt*, sed in voluntate divina, et quia earum maxima pars, nempe aether, est invisibilis; proprietates earum a causis deducere, nos qui eas *non videmus*, non possumus. Veruntamen ab ipsis proprietatibus quas videmus, consequentias deducendo eo usque procedere concessum est, ut tales vel tales earum causas esse *potuisse* demonstrare possimus." ["because of this fact (that is, that *we ourselves create* the figures), it happens that geometry hath been and is demonstrable. On the other hand, since the causes of natural things are not in our power, but in the divine will, and since the greatest part of them, namely the ether, is invisible; *we, that do not see them*, cannot deduce their qualities from their causes. Of course, we can, by deducing as far as possible the consequences of those qualities that we do see, demonstrate that such and such *could* have been their causes."] *De homine* 10.5. [We have used the partial translation of *De homine* by Gert, Scott-Craig, and Wood in *Man and Citizen: De Homine and De Cive*, 42.] "theoremata physicae, quia actiones naturales pleraeque sensum fugiunt . . . pauca possunt demonstrari." [because the theorems of physics avoid natural actions and most senses, few can be demonstrated.] *Opera Latina* 4:5. [From *Examinatio and Emendatio Mathematicae Hodiernae*.] "Principia igitur, unde pendent quae sequuntur [sc. effectus naturae nobis per sensum cogniti], non facimus nos, nec pronunciamus universaliter, ut definitiones, sed a naturae conditore in ipsis rebus posita observamus . . . Neque necessitatem

This concept of natural science is the presupposition of Hobbes's thesis that miracles are, in principle, not knowable to natural reason.²³⁹ Miracles as miracles are not knowable since God does not work miracles in a more incomprehensible way than he works natural events. If, however, natural events, despite their unintelligibility in principle, can be "explained," that is, can be traced back to their possible causes, so too can "miracles" be "explained" with the same justification, that is, be traced back to their possible causes. It suffices for the explanation of every natural event, as it does for the explanation of every "miracle," that one indicate its possible causes, without its ever being possible or necessary to verify empirically the causes that are indicated as possible.²⁴⁰

The science that enables man to explain nature enables him at the same time to explain "miracles." Experience shows that the less natural-scientific knowledge men have at their disposal, the more they are inclined to regard processes as miraculous.²⁴¹ In this sense it is true that miracles are directed only to the "elect": the "elect" are precisely those same poor in spirit who are without any scientific culture. Hence, one can expect that with the progressive

haec faciunt theorematis, sed tantum, non absque proprietatibus [propositionibus] universalibus supra demonstratis, generationis alicujus ostendunt possibilitatem." [The principles, therefore, upon which the things that follow depend (i.e., the effects of nature that are known to us through the senses), are not such as we either ourselves make or pronounce universally as definitions; but such as we observe placed in the things themselves by the founder of nature. . . . Nor do they impose on us the necessity of a theorem; but only, though not without the general properties (propositions) demonstrated above, show us the possibility of a certain generation]. *De corpore* 25.1. See, moreover, *Elements of Law*, p. 168 [there seems to be an error here, as it is not at all clear from looking either at p. 168 of vol. 4 of *English Works*, which contains the *Elements of Law* or at the same page in Tönnies's 1889 edition of the *Elements of Law* what Strauss could have in mind], as well as *English Works*, 7:183f. A science is then demonstrative not only if the causes with which it concerns itself are created by us but also if these causes are present to us. Concerning the analysis of a certain natural phenomenon, Hobbes can thus say that its "causa" would be "non modo possibilis, sed etiam certa et manifesta" [not only possible but even certain and manifest]. *De corpore* 29.2; one must understand this here: certa, *quia* sensibus manifesta [certain because manifest to the senses].

239. Hobbes's explicit justification of this thesis does not allow for an immediate recognition of his real view (see above, n. 222). Cf., in this connection, the following paragraph.

240. Cf., in this connection, the clear presentation by F. Brandt, *Thomas Hobbes' Mechanical Conception of Nature* (Copenhagen/London, 1928), esp. 342 and 370.

241. "Moreover, seeing Admiration and Wonder, is consequent to the knowledge and experience, wherewith men are endued, some more, some lesse; it followeth, that the same thing, may be a Miracle to one, and not to another. And thence it is, that ignorant and superstitious men make great Wonders of those works, which other men, knowing to proceed from Nature (which is not the immediate, but the ordinary work of God), admire not at all." *Leviathan*, chap. 37 (236).

cultivation of natural science, belief in miracles will lose more and more of its significance, ultimately disappearing entirely. For natural science is still in its beginnings,²⁴² and gradually even the unwise multitude will be educated and thereby become mistrustful of reports of miracles that come from a dim past, that is, from an age in which there was no science.²⁴³ Modern science, which excludes the possibility of miracles so little that it rather has as its actual foundation a concession to that possibility, secures itself subsequently against that possibility by claiming, on the basis of the consciousness of progress that belongs to it, and thus on the basis of a historical reflection, that the belief in miracles is relative to the prescientific stage of humanity.

d. Hobbes and Descartes*

The affinity between the founding of science sketched above and the *Cartesian* one leaps to mind. Previous studies do not allow a final judgment as to whether Hobbes carried out this founding independently of Descartes or under his influence. However this may be, we cannot avoid a summary comparison of the fundamental reflections of the two philosophers if we want to see the genuine basis of Hobbes's critique of religion.

For this basis is by no means the new science as such. It is certainly the case that this science first secured, in principle, the radical critique of the knowability of miracles, that is, the claim that the knowledge of miracles is not only very difficult, not only practically impossible, but even impossible in principle. But Hobbes arrives at the new science by first carrying out a

242. "Physica . . . res novitia est." [Physics . . . is a novel thing.] *De corpore*, epistola dedicatoria. "Natural philosophy is therefore but young." *English Works*, 1:ix.

243. "Paulatim eruditur vulgus, et verborum, quibus utitur, tandem aliquando vim intelligit . . . Cavendum ergo imprimis est doctoribus religionis ne regulis colendi Deum quicquam immisceant ex doctrina physicorum. Nam evitari vix potest, cum rerum naturalium nullam habeant scientiam, quin aliquando incidant in propositiones absurdas; quae postea, etiam ab indoctis detectae, faciant ut omnia quae docebunt contemnuntur." ["Little by little the people became educated, and at least sometimes came to understand the meaning of the words they used . . . Therefore doctors of religion must especially take care lest they mix anything from the teachings of physics into the rules for worshipping God. For, since they have no scientific knowledge of natural things, at times they can hardly avoid falling into absurd propositions; afterwards such men make everything that they teach to be condemned."] *De homine* 14.13. [*Man and Citizen*, 80–81.] "too rash beleeve of reports; which the most sincere men, without great knowledge of naturall causes, (such as the fathers were) are commonly the most subject to." *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (473).

* This replaces the original subhead, "The Basis of the Hobbesian Critique of Religion (Hobbes and Descartes)." —EDS.

response to the claim of miracles by revealed religion, thus in the struggle against this claim, and thus on the basis of a primary skepticism about miracles. This primary skepticism is shown in the thesis that knowledge of miracles is very difficult, practically impossible; for this thesis is "earlier" than modern science, independent of it, as is proven by the fact that the arguments on which this thesis rests were already advanced as much by medieval critics of religion as by Hobbes, and hence under the rule of an essentially premodern understanding of science.²⁴⁴ There is, therefore, an ascertainable basis for Hobbes's critique of religion that is "earlier" than modern science. Now, to identify this basis, it does not admittedly suffice to put together the arguments that were brought to bear against miracles in unchanged form from the Middle Ages to the seventeenth century; for the basis of the critique of religion that we mean is precisely the *presupposition* of those arguments, the horizon within which they first become possible at all. In order to identify this presupposition, we will compare the fundamental reflections of Hobbes with those of Descartes. For if Descartes's more conservative position on revealed religion is not entirely accidental, is not grounded in private considerations and circumstances alone, then the difference between the two philosophers with regard to revealed religion must be grounded in their difference with regard to philosophic principles. But the comparison of their principles, which are at least at first glance astonishingly similar, will not only allow the essentially premodern basis of the critique of religion that Hobbes has in common with the Middle Ages (and antiquity) to come to the fore; it will lead, at the same time, to the knowledge of what is surely the presupposition preceding the founding of modern science, though a presupposition certainly no less specifically modern, by which Hobbes's critique of religion is characteristically distinguished from the medieval (and classical) one.

The fundamental reflection that Descartes developed, above all in the *Meditationes*, can, insofar as it comes directly into consideration for our context, be summarily restated in the following way: (1) the illusions of the senses justify doubt of everything that I know through the senses; (2) the absence of a criterion for the definite distinction between waking and dreaming justifies doubt of all knowledge that is not fully indifferent to the distinction between waking and dreaming, and therefore, as things stand, doubt of all nonmathematical knowledge, and in particular of the conviction that corporeal things exist; (3) the possibility that an omnipotent and evil demon,

244. Kraus, J. R. [Most likely refers to Paul Kraus, "Beiträge zur islamischen Ketzer-geschichte," *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 14 (1933): 341-357—TRANS.]

who wants to deceive me by all means, has created me justifies doubt of *all* knowledge (and therefore even of mathematical knowledge, though no less doubt of the knowledge that has already been called into question before); (4) but even or precisely on the basis of the presupposition of this reason for radical doubt, it is absolutely certain that I am because I doubt, and indeed I am insofar as I am a doubting or generally a thinking being, conscious of myself as thinking; this absolutely certain knowledge of my being, which is the first absolutely certain knowledge ever, does not include any knowledge or opinion whatsoever about the world of bodies: it is as indifferent to the idealistic denial of the existence of a world of bodies as it is to the materialistic assertion that my being is corporeal; (5) I can legitimately go beyond the circle of the absolute knowledge that I am conscious of myself as representing only on the basis of the refutation of the possibility confining itself to this circle, that I am dependent on a *Deus deceptor*; this refutation is possible because I find among my ideas, and thus within my consciousness, the idea of God as an absolutely perfect being, and because this representation proves what is thus represented; because, therefore, God, as the absolutely perfect being, exists and because this being is as such absolutely truthful, I am not in the hands of an absolutely evil being that wants to deceive me, but in the hands of an absolutely good being; (6) my erring is therefore not necessary, but I can avoid error if only I make good use of the powers with which I am endowed by creation; hence, everything that I can see truly clearly and distinctly is necessarily true; and therefore, in particular, all mathematical knowledge is absolutely certain; (7) therefore, since in my clear and distinct knowledge of my mind, not even the least reference to the corporeal is to be found, it is moreover absolutely certain that I am distinct in my essence from my body and that I can exist without it; (8) and, finally, because God is truthful, it is absolutely certain that my natural inclination to believe in the existence of corporeal things is not fundamentally mistaken, that is, it is absolutely certain that corporeal things exist.

Hobbes's position on Descartes's founding of science can be seen to a certain degree from his *Objectiones* to the *Meditations*. In the discussion of the First Meditation (theses 1–3 in our enumeration), Hobbes acknowledges its truth as decisively as possible: “Veritatem—hujus Meditationis agnoscimus” [the truth of this Meditation, we acknowledge].²⁴⁵ Hobbes, therefore, holds

245. *Opera Latina*, 5:251. [Hobbes's Objections to Descartes's *Meditations* have been translated into English by Donald A. Cress and are available in René Descartes, *Philosophical Essays and Correspondence*, ed. Roger Ariew (Cambridge: Hackett, 2000), 167, *Third Set of Objections, by a Famous English Philosopher, with the Author's Replies, Against Meditation I: Concerning*

the necessity of beginning philosophy with universal doubt in Descartes's sense to be demonstrated. It is precisely thereby that he acknowledges the regression into consciousness, into the world of consciousness, as the foundation of philosophy. The judgment we quoted on the First Meditation is confirmed decisively by the fact that Hobbes explicitly begins the investigation proper in the *Elements* and in *De corpore* with the fiction of the annihilation of the world, with the retreat to the "ideas."²⁴⁶ Is he therefore in complete agreement with Descartes? Have the arguments of the latter completely convinced him? On closer inspection, this is shown not to be the case at all. Hobbes mentions in general only the first two arguments. And, already on the basis of the *Objectiones*, it emerges that he does not hold these arguments to be irrefutable.²⁴⁷ That this is the case becomes completely clear if one draws on his other writings.²⁴⁸ If Hobbes does not hold the first two arguments to be compelling, and if, as his procedure in the *Elements* and in *De corpore* shows, he nevertheless regarded the result of the First Meditation, the retreat to consciousness, as necessary, then having made the retreat without justification, and having never expressed any reservation against the third, decisive argument of Descartes, the *Deus deceptor* argument,²⁴⁹ he

Those Things That Can Be Called into Doubt. Cress translates Hobbes's Latin sentence as "Therefore, we acknowledge the truth of this Meditation."]]

246. The kinship between Hobbes's grounding of science and Descartes's is recognized clearly above all by Tönnies (see *Hobbes*, xiv and 119). But when Tönnies says, "Hobbes begins, just as Descartes does, from the fact that for each thinking being only sensations, i.e., only subjective or psychological phenomena, are given" (ibid., 119), he does not understand that this "fact" acquires its peculiar evidence only as a result of the universal doubt: the insight from which Hobbes and Descartes *begin* is *not* the evidence of the consciousness.

247. "si sensus nostros sine alia ratiocinatione sequamur, merito dubitamus an aliquid existat necne." [if we follow our senses without any other ratiocination, we shall rightly doubt if anything exists or not.] *Opera Latina*, 5:251. Therefore: "alia ratiocinatio" secures us against the consequences of the deceptiveness of the senses, etc.—Descartes himself stresses in his *Responsio* to Hobbes that the arguments for universal doubt are not "true" but merely "plausible." (*Third Set of Objections*, by a Famous English Philosopher, with the Author's Replies).

248. On argument 1, cf. *Elements of Law* 1.2.10: "the great deception of sense, which also is by sense to be corrected."—On argument 2, cf. *Leviathan*, chap. 2 (17): "it is a hard matter, and by many thought impossible to distinguish between Sense and Dreaming. For my part, when I consider . . . , I am well satisfied, that being awake, I know I dreame not; though when I dreame, I think my selfe awake."

249. Cf., in this connection, G. Krüger, "Die Herkunft des philosophischen Selbstbewusstseins," *Logos* 22 (1933): 243ff.: "The third argument is peculiar to Descartes; it is the decisive one. . . . Only the third argument suffices for the goal of justifying a real *universal* doubt." [Translated by Fabrice Paradis Béland as "The Origin of Philosophical Self-Consciousness," in *New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy* 7 (2007): 228–29.]

must have held precisely that third argument to be decisive. Since for Descartes also, the actual ground for doubt is the possibility of a *Deus deceptor*, we claim, in the first place, the following: Hobbes agrees completely with Descartes about the fact that the possibility of a *Deus deceptor*, and only that possibility, makes the retreat into consciousness necessary.

As a result of this fundamental agreement, the opposition between the two philosophers stands out all the more sharply. This opposition has its basis in Hobbes's denial of the possibility of a rational theology claimed by Descartes.²⁵⁰ Hobbes denies, *first*, that man has an idea of God;²⁵¹ he does concede that I can deduce from my ideas a cause of my ideas, and then deduce causes that are more and more remote, to the point of finally coming to an assumption of an eternal cause that is called God; but, *second*, he denies that the createdness of the world, indeed the provability of the createdness of the world in general, follows from the existence of God; but if the createdness of the world is not absolutely certain, Descartes's whole deduction is left hanging;²⁵² and, *third*, even if the createdness of the world could be proven,

250. The difference concerning the essence of the soul—Descartes's spiritualism and Hobbes's materialism—is, by contrast, secondary. For Descartes, too, concedes that the incorporeality of consciousness as such does not exclude the possibility that consciousness is merely an accident of body; the independence of *res cogitans* from *res extensa* follows only from the principle that all things that are clearly and distinctly *represented* as independent of one another are independent from one another; and this principle rests on the insight of rational theology that God is absolutely truthful. To Hobbes's objection: "Potest . . . esse ut *res cogitans* sit subiectum mentis, rationis, vel intellectus, ideoque corporeum aliquid: cuius contrarium sumitur, non probatur" [It can be that *res cogitans* is that which underlies mind, reason, or intellect and hence that it is something corporeal: the contrary of which he assumes and does not prove] (*Opera Latina*, 5:253), Descartes replies in this way: "Imo, contrarium non assumpsi . . . , sed plane indeterminatum reliqui usque ad sextam Meditationem, in qua probatur" [On the contrary, I did not assume . . . but left it completely undetermined up to the Sixth Meditation, where it is proved] (*ibid.*, 255).

251. "nullam Dei habemus imaginem sive ideam: ideoque prohibemur Deum sub imagine adorare, ne illum, qui *inconceptibilis* est, videamur nobis concipere." [we have no image or idea of God: this is why we are forbidden to worship God through an image, so that we do not appear to conceive of him who is *inconceivable*.] *Opera Latina*, 5:295f.—"Quoniam ergo non est demonstratum nos ideam Dei habere, et Christiana religio nos obligat credere Deum esse *inconcepsibilem* [inconceivable], hoc est, ut opinor, cuius idea non habetur: sequitur existentiam Dei non esse demonstratam, multo minus creationem." [Because therefore it has not been demonstrated that we have an idea of God, and the Christian religion obliges us to believe that God is *inconceivable* [inconceivable], that is, as I believe, that no idea can be had of him: it follows that the existence of God has not been demonstrated, still less his creation of the universe.] *Ibid.*, 268.

252. See the previous notes, as well as *ibid.*, 259f. and 266; cf. *De corpore* 26.1 and *De homine* 1.1.

he denies that God's absolute truthfulness, as Descartes understands and must understand it, can be proven.²⁵³ The ultimate presupposition of this entire critique is the thesis that God is simply *incomprehensible*. This means, however, that Hobbes turns against Descartes with the same tendency with which Descartes himself turns against the theological tradition;²⁵⁴ Hobbes outdoes Descartes on Descartes's own terms.

If Hobbes rejects Descartes's refutation of the *Deus deceptor* argument, and if, as we have every reason to assume, he acknowledged that the argument was justified at least from the outset,²⁵⁵ then it is not possible for him to assert the existence of corporeal things; it must then be enough for him that we know with certainty only the objects of our representations, not the things themselves; he must then be a radical "phenomenalist." At first glance, what speaks against this result is the fact, which Hobbes continually drives home, that substance and body are identical; only bodies (in motion) are real; spirit is nothing other than motion in the brain.²⁵⁶ But precisely as regards this "materialism," the question arises as to whether it is meant as "metaphysical" or whether it is not meant, rather, as "methodical." Certainly Hobbes identifies "substance" and "body"; but is "body" not the positing of consciousness, of thinking? Hobbes teaches not merely the phenomenality [*Phenomenalität*] of sensible qualities, but also the phenomenality of space and time.²⁵⁷ Now, he admittedly distinguishes between "imaginary" space and "real" space, which is identical with the extension or magnitude of body;

253. "Communis est opinio, non peccare medicos qui aegrotos decipiunt ipsorum salutis causa: neque patres qui filios suos fallunt boni ipsorum gratia: neque crimen deceptionis consistere in falsitate dictorum, sed in injuria decipientium. Viderit ergo D.C. an vera sit propositio universaliter sumpta, *Deus nullo casu potest nos fallere*; nam si non sit vera ita universaliter, non sequitur conclusio illa, *ergo res corporeae existunt*." [The common opinion is that doctors who deceive their patients for the sake of their health do not sin: nor do parents who deceive their children for their good: nor does the crime of deception consist in the falsity of what is said, but in the harm caused by the deception. Descartes should have considered whether the proposition "*In no case can God deceive us*" is true, if taken in a universal sense; for if this proposition is not universally true, then the conclusion "*therefore corporeal things exist*" does not follow.] *Opera Latina*, 5:273.

254. Cf. E. Gilson, *La liberté chez Descartes* (Paris, 1913), esp. 92 and 102ff.

255. "But what shall we answer to the words in Ecclesiasticus: 'Say not though, it is through the Lord I fell away; say not though, he hath caused me to err.' If it had not been, 'say not though,' but 'think not though,' I should have answered that Ecclesiasticus is Apocrypha, and merely human authority. But it is very true that such words as these are not to be said . . . Yet true it is, that he did so make him." *English Works*, 5:14f. Cf. also *English Works* 5:6f., the reference, among others, to Job 12:17.

256. Cf., e.g., *Leviathan*, chap. 34 (269–70) and *Opera Latina*, 5:258.

257. *De corpore* 7.2–3.

and by "body" he explicitly understands *quicquid non dependens a cogitatione nostra* [whatever is not dependent on our thinking], which is characterized by extension and which, working upon the sense-perceiving subject, is represented by the latter as occupying a place in phenomenal space.²⁵⁸ Subsequently, only the bodies that are characterized solely by extension appear to exist in themselves. Any accident, however, and therefore also extension, is only one way to conceive of body.²⁵⁹ There remains, therefore, "of a reality outside of our representations nothing but the empty concept of a body or a substance since only that can express the belief that something like a thing in and for itself might be present at all, i.e., something that . . . is not dependent on our thoughts."²⁶⁰ But even this concession does not seem to be necessary. For if, according to Hobbes, even body characterized merely by extension is not real, but is a *merum nomen* [mere name],²⁶¹ then this is true, and all the more so, of body apart from extension. This result is completely confirmed by the fact that Hobbes explicates the concept of "body" as "thing in itself" in the explicit context of a treatment of *appearances* as *species rerum externarum, id est, tanquam non existentes, sed existere sive extra stare apparentes*.²⁶²

One cannot deny, therefore, that Hobbes attempted, with all the means at his disposal, to establish the foundation of natural science while leaving open the question whether things in themselves exist.²⁶³ Yet admittedly: only the foundation of natural science, not genuine natural science itself. For the latter, as distinguished from and indeed in opposition to the foundational disciplines, has to do with *corpora mundana sive quae re ipsa existunt* [worldly bodies, or those which exist in themselves], with *ipsae res* [things

258. *De corpore* 8.1 and 8.4.

259. *De corpore* 8.2 and 8.4.

260. Tönnies, *Hobbes*, 297. [The phrasing in Tönnies is slightly different, at least in the original article.]

261. *De corpore* 7.24 and 7.23.

262. *De corpore* 7.1 ["as Species of external things, not as really existing, but appearing only to exist"]. Cf. also the characterization of empirical natural science in *De corpore* 24, end, and 25.1.

263. In our context it can remain open whether we have presented Hobbes's grounding of natural science as essentially more "phenomenalist" than it is in reality. For it will be apparent either way from what follows that Hobbes's philosophy is on the whole *not* phenomenalist. In this regard, it should however be recalled that the interpretation suggested above, as much of Hobbes's teaching on accident as of his remark on *materia prima* [prime matter] (that it is a *merum nomen* [mere name]), is in no way secured. Cf., in this connection, John Laird, *Hobbes* (London, 1934), esp. 94ff.

in themselves].²⁶⁴ The foundational sciences deal with the apparent world as an appearance "to us"; since they rest on the fiction of the annihilation of the world, they presuppose the objects of sense perception not as such but only as objects of memory and imagination, as mere *accidentia animi externa* [accidents external to the mind].²⁶⁵ Genuine natural science, on the other hand, does away with this fiction; it reestablishes the right of sense perception and of the power of its commerce with the present, real world; it deals with the objects of sense perception as such, with the phenomena as what nature itself shows us.²⁶⁶ While the foundational disciplines have to do only with the *final result* of sense perception—the representation by memory and imagination of the things outside us (which result has the characteristic of being "in our power," dependent on us)—genuine natural science goes back to the *causes* of sense perception, which are plainly independent of us. Because genuine natural science therefore transcends the world of appearances that is dependent on us, it is necessarily hypothetical; for the "things in themselves," that is, the causes of our representations of them, are not in our power and are accordingly not accessible to any absolutely certain knowledge; we can deduce them only a posteriori, and even then only according to the principles of mechanics created by us ourselves.²⁶⁷ Our knowledge of the "things in themselves" is accordingly restricted to altogether hypothetical entries in a mechanistic system that is designed a priori and is thus purely "phenomenalist." Therefore, however skeptically Hobbes may have thought

264. *De corpore* 24, end, and 25.1.

265. "Dico igitur, remansuras illi homini, mundi et corporum omnium, quae, ante sublationem eorum, oculis aspererat, vel aliis sensibus perceperat, ideas, id est *memoriam imaginationemque* magnitudinum, motuum, sonorum, colorum, etc. atque etiam eorum ordinis et partium; quae omnia etsi ideae tantum et phantasmata sint, ipsi imaginanti interne accidentia, nihilominus tanquam externa, et a virtute animi minime dependentia, apparitura esse. His itaque nomina imponeret, haec subtraheret et componeret. Cum enim caeteris rebus destructis manere tamen hominem illum, nimirum *cogitare, imaginari, et meminisse* supposuerimus, aliud quod cogitet praeterquam quae *praeterita* sunt, nihil est." ["I say therefore there would remain to that Man Ideas of the World, and of all such Bodies as he had, before their annihilation, seen with his eyes, or perceived by any other Sense; that is to say, the *Memory and Imagination* of Magnitudes, Motions, Sounds, Colours, &c. as also of their order & parts. All which things though they be nothing but Ideas & Phantasms happening internally to him that imagineth; yet they will appear as if they were externall, and not at all depending upon any power of the Mind. And these are the things to which he would give Names, and substract them from, and compound them with one another. For seeing that after the destruction of all other things, I suppose Man still remaining, and namely that he *thinks, imagines, and remembers*, there can be nothing for him to thinke of but what is Past."] *De corpore* 7.1.

266. *De corpore* 25.1.

267. See n. 238 above.

about *knowledge* of the "things in themselves," the *existence* of "things in themselves" is for him, for that very reason, undoubtedly certain, indisputable, self-evident.²⁶⁸

One must go further and say that, for him, it is not only the existence but also the *corporeality* of the "things in themselves" that is self-evident.²⁶⁹ Being and being corporeal, "substance" and "body," according to his claim, are identical. In order to recognize what this *presupposition* signifies *originally*, one does well to follow Hobbes's own explanation of the *prescientific*, "vulgar" idea of "body." According to the prescientific view, not everything is corporeal—as it is according to the scientific view—but only what is visible and tangible. Indeed, of the two senses that disclose corporeality, the sense of touch has the advantage. For when we refer to something visible as corporeal, we do this with respect to its opacity, with respect to the fact that it *hinders* us from seeing any further. But we experience a hindrance in a more remarkable way through the sense of touch when something *resists* our force.²⁷⁰ According to the prescientific view, corporeality means the same

268. Hobbes's skepticism and certainty are shown equally clearly in the following dialogue: "A. . . . certainly when the sun seems to my eye no bigger than a dish, there is *behind it somewhere somewhat else, I suppose a real sun*, which creates those fancies, by working, *one way or other*, upon my eyes, and other organs of my senses, to cause that diversity of fancy.—B. You say right; and that is it I mean by the word body, which briefly I define to be any thing that hath a being in itself, without the help of sense . . . Your desire, you say, is to know the causes of the effects or phenomena of nature; and you confess they are fancies, and, consequently, that they are in yourself; so that the causes you seek for only are without you, and now you would know how those external bodies work upon you to produce those phenomena." *English Works*, 7:80ff. [from *Decameron Physiologicum*]. How self-evident the existence of "things in themselves" is for Hobbes is shown also and precisely in his approach: he begins not with the doubt of the existence of the world but with the *fiction* of its nonbeing.

269. Compare nn. 268 and 256 above. Brandt, who claims that Hobbes's "materialism" is meant not as "methodical" but as "metaphysical," arrives at the same result (*Thomas Hobbes' Mechanical Conception of Nature*, 356ff.). Brandt admittedly underestimates the counterexamples to this claim in thinking that the "phenomenalist" interpretation of Hobbes's philosophy rests exclusively on one dark sentence in *De corpore* 25.1: this interpretation rests on all of parts 2 and 3 of *De corpore*. Brandt fails to recognize that this "materialism" is actually not problematic for Hobbes's consciousness but is indeed fundamentally problematic, or in any case becomes so, on the basis of the presuppositions of *De corpore*.—Basil Willey has recognized clearly the assumption-like character of Hobbes's materialism. *The Seventeenth Century Background* (London, 1934), n. 98f.

270. "But in the sense of common people, not all the Universe is called Body, but only such parts thereof as they can discern by the sense of Feeling, to resist their force, or by the sense of their Eyes, to hinder them from a farther prospect." *Leviathan*, chap. 34 (270). "though that name [sc. bodies] in common Speech be given to such bodies only, as are visible, or palpable; that is, that have some degree of Opacity." *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (463). That the vulgar concep-

thing as *resistibility* and *palpability*. The prescientific idea is so little called into question by science that the genuine achievement of science lies precisely in understanding *all* beings in accordance with the prescientific idea of body. The scientific view differs from the prescientific one by the fact, and only by the fact, that for it there are only bodies, while for the latter there are also, besides bodies, incorporeal beings, "spirits."²⁷¹ By "spirits" here are meant things that do not have an effect on us,²⁷² but that is the same as saying things that are not tangible²⁷³ and do not make themselves known as real through resistance. Science rests on the insight that insofar as they actually are or have a foundation in being, these "spirits" are also corporeal, that is, that the things that supposedly have no effect on us and are not resistant in truth have an effect on us and are resistant. Science rests on the observation of such effects, which are not observed by the vulgar view and are so little "spiritual" that they are in fact *strong* effects, effects of the same kind that we experience when something resists us or presses upon us.²⁷⁴ Hence, all original knowledge of things, that is, all perception and, in particular, sight is explicated analogously to the experience of resistance and pressure, and therefore analogously to the experiences of the sense of touch.²⁷⁵ The scientific view, therefore, rests only on the broadening or, more precisely, on the universalization of the vulgar view: scientific "materialism" understands

tion is the more original one follows from the following statement: "Ego per corpus intelligo nunc id de quo vere dici potest, quod existit realiter in seipso, habetque etiam aliquam magnitudinem . . . *Memini* tamen quod corpus putarem *aliquando* id solum esse, quod tactui meo vel visui obstaret." ["I *now* take body to mean something about which it can truly be said that it really exists, of itself, and also that it has a certain magnitude. I do recall, however, that *at one time* I considered that body was that which met my touch or sight."] *Opera Latina*, 3:537 [translated by George Wright, *Religion, Politics, and Thomas Hobbes* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006), 90; emphases are Strauss's].

271. "For the universe, being the Aggregate of all Bodies, there is no reall part thereof that is not also Body; nor any thing properly a Body, that is not also part of (that Aggregate of all Bodies) the Universe." *Leviathan*, chap. 34 (269). Cf., moreover, the preceding note and n. 202.

272. "By the name of spirit we understand a body natural, but of such subtilty that it worketh not on the senses." *Elements of Law* 1.11.4.

273. See n. 202 above.

274. "And as pressing, rubbing, or striking the Eye, makes us fancy a light; and pressing the Eare, produceth a dinne; so do the bodies also we see, or hear; produce the same by their strong, though unobserved actions." *Leviathan*, chap. 1 (14). "And although unstudied men, doe not conceive any motion at all to be there, where the thing moved is invisible . . . ; yet that doth not hinder, but that such motions are." *Leviathan*, chap. 6 (38).

275. "The cause of Sense, is the external Body, or Object, which *presseth* the organ proper to each Sense, either immediatly, as in the Tast and Touch; or mediately, as in Seeing, Hearing, and Smelling." *Leviathan*, chap. 1 (13).

all beings in orientation to the phenomenon of resistance, which we experience through the sense of touch. The assumption* that being is corporeal being²⁷⁶ thus fundamentally means: being is resistance and palpability.²⁷⁷ For Hobbes, *the existence of a resistant world* is from the outset and always self-evident.

On the basis of the assumption that "substance" and "body" are identical, that being is resistibility fundamentally and palpability, it is understandable why for Hobbes, as opposed to Descartes, the existence of "things in themselves" is self-evident: it is "self-evident" that there is a world independent of us because we experience the world in the resistance that it offers us, because we feel we experience it as independent of our thoughts.²⁷⁸ And it is further understandable why, despite his "rationalistic" tendency, Hobbes as opposed to Descartes never denies the "empiricist" conviction that all knowledge derives from sense perception.²⁷⁹ Since being means fundamentally resistibility and palpability, all certainty about being rests, not on insight

276. This presupposition also lies at the basis of political science. For this science supposes that the sensual goods are the real goods: "spiritual" goods are goods only for vanity (*De cive* 1.2). The fundamental good, or the condition for the possibility of all sensual goods, is the preservation of our *body*: the right to the preservation of our body is the origin of all rights and duties.

277. If being is fundamentally resistibility, being must be radically understood from the most fundamental instance of resistance. But the most fundamental resistance is the resistance on the part of other men that threatens my life. Therefore, fear of violent death not only is the principle of right and of the state, but is at the same time the principle of *all* reasonable conduct, of all enlightenment, of all awakening to the understanding of being. For the education of man toward being a citizen is accomplished through "adversity or age" (see Ferdinand Tönnies, *Hobbes-Analekten* I, *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 17 [1904]: 294ff.), *nocumentis vel praeceptis* [by harms or precepts] (*De cive* 1.2), *disciplina atque damnorum experientia* [through learning and experience of evils] (*De cive*, praefatio); and it is not only moral enlightenment that is carried out in this way, but *all* enlightenment: "men have no other means to acknowledge their own Darknesses, but onely by reasoning from the un-foreseen mischances, that befall them in their ways" (*Leviathan*, chap. 44 [418]). The greatest *nocumentum*, *dammum*, *infortunium* [harm, evil, misfortune] that there is, however, is violent death or the danger of violent death.

* In this section we use "assumption" for *Vorurteil*, which ordinarily means "prejudice."—TRANS.

278. Hence Hobbes does not need to present *proof* for the "reality of the external world." The material for such a proof (significantly, left unused) is found in *De corpore* 25.1, end (the changes in our representations [*Vorstellungen*—sometimes rendered "ideas"] testify to the existence of external causes of these changes).

279. "adeo ut si phaenomena principia sint cognoscendi caetera, sensionem cognoscendi ipsa principia principium esse, scientiamque omnem ab ea derivari dicendum est." ["so that if the appearance be the principles by which we know all other things, we must needs acknowledge sense to be the principle by which we know those principles, and that all the knowledge we have

and sight, but on sensations and feelings; but this “*felt necessity*” is that on which “*empiricism*,” as opposed to “*rationalism*,” rests.²⁸⁰ And finally, it is understandable why Hobbes, as distinguished from Descartes, characterizes the body, not only by extension but, prior to that, by its independence from our thoughts,²⁸¹ and hence quite often also, and especially, by its motion, by its work.

The assumption that is decisive for Hobbes is capable of further specification. If one compares Hobbes’s foundational discussion with that of Descartes, one notices that Hobbes carries out the retreat into consciousness with greater hesitation than does Descartes.²⁸² For Descartes, it follows that *all cogitationes* [cogitations]—therefore, in the same way, thought, will, representation, and perception—do not by themselves presuppose the existence of a (corporeal) world; the retreat into consciousness is hence a retreat into consciousness in its totality. Hobbes, on the other hand, abstracts from the existence of the corporeal world only in the context of considering the faculty of *knowledge*. It is precisely for this reason that he declares it self-evident that the ability to will and to move is possible only on the presupposition of the existence of a corporeal world. And not only that; he acknowledges a relative independence of consciousness from the corporeal world only with respect to representations of the imagination and memory, or rather with respect to concepts of the understanding grounded in these representations, but that is to say, only with respect to *derivative* representations, and not with respect to the original representations, that is, those of sense perception, which underlie the derivative ones. That man is part of the world, and entirely bound up with the world in his existence, is not to be doubted; Hobbes does not, like Descartes, question even provisionally the notion of

is derived from it.” *De corpore* 25.1. [Thomas Hobbes: *Human Nature and De Corpore Politico*, ed. Gaskin, 213.] Cf. also *Opera Latina*, 5:257f.

280. “Now if mathematics comes into conflict with a reason that admits only empirical principles . . . then the greatest possible evidence of demonstration is in manifest contradiction with the alleged inferences from empirical principles, and one has to ask, like Cheselden’s blind man, ‘Which deceives me, sight or touch?’ For empiricism is based on a necessity *felt*, but rationalism on a necessity *seen*.” Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, preface, toward the end [The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant. *Practical Philosophy*, trans. and ed. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 147]. Cf., in this connection and in connection with our exposition in the text, G. Krüger, *Philosophie und Moral in der Kantischen Kritik* (Mohr: Tübingen, 1931), §24 (“The idea of being of English ‘empiricism’ in Kant”).

281. See p. 99 and n. 270 above.

282. Cf. also Laird, *Hobbes*, 132: “the experiment of feigning annihilation, when compared, say, with Descartes’s philosophical doubt, was curiously hesitating, since it presupposed that the memory of real bodies ‘before their annihilation’ was retained.”

man as an *animal rationale* [rational animal]: even in the fictitious destruction of the world, there remains not merely a *res cogitans* [thinking thing], but a *man*.²⁸³ That consciousness is possible only *in* the world and *through* the world, and indeed as an accident of a living body, is, to Hobbes, not for a moment subject to "methodical" doubt. This is particularly clearly shown in Hobbes's confrontation with Descartes's *Meditations*. Hobbes proceeds here much more dogmatically than does Descartes. To begin with, Descartes has no other intention than to set forth the phenomenal difference between consciousness and corporeality; he has the opportunity, which he uses, of provisionally leaving open the question of whether consciousness is not a mere accident of the living body. Hobbes, on the other hand, does not even want to discuss the "spiritualist" possibility that contradicts his assumption.²⁸⁴ Not only the existence of a resistant world, but also the absolute dependence of our consciousness, of our being as men on this world, on the irresistibly greater power of the resistant world over our consciousness, is self-evident for Hobbes. The vehemence with which he defends not only "materialism" but also "determinism" has its ground in the power exerted over him by the unifying, fundamental conviction that *we men are simply in the power of a world that is simply independent of us and resistant to our force*. This conviction finds its ultimate theological expression in the proposition that we are in the hands of a corporeal God, whose power we cannot resist. It is said of this God, the first cause, the source of all being, that we do not see him, but only feel him, the way a blind man does not see but only feels the flame that warms him.²⁸⁵ As all knowledge of being, that is, as all knowledge

283. "For the understanding of what I mean by the power *cognitive*, we must remember and acknowledge that there be in our minds continually certain images or conceptions of the things without us, insomuch as that if a *man* could be alive, and all the *rest* of the world annihilated, he should nevertheless retain the image thereof." *Elements of Law* 1.1.8. Cf., moreover, nn. 237 and 265 above.

284. Cf. above, n. 250, and, in addition, the following statement by Descartes in his *Response* to Hobbes's *Objections*: "Fateor autem ultro me ad rem sive substantiam, quam volebam exuere omnibus iis quae ad ipsam non pertinent, significandam, usum fuisse verbis quam maxime potui abstractis: ut contra, hic philosophus utitur vocibus quam maxime concretis, nempe subjecti, materiae, et corporis, ad istam rem cogitantem significandam, *ne patiat*ur ipsam a corpore divelli." [I grant, however, that I used words which were the most abstract I could find, in order to refer to the thing or substance which I wanted to strip of everything that did not pertain to it; on the other hand, this philosopher uses words that are as concrete as possible, certainly subject, matter, and body, for signifying the *res cogitans*, in order not to permit for it to be separated from body."] *Opera Latina*, 5:254.

285. *Elements of Law* 1.11.2 and *Opera Latina*, 5:260. *Leviathan*, chap. 11 (74-75).—That Hobbes already thought (even if not publicly) the corporeality of God at the time of these two

of corporeality, rests fundamentally on the experience of resistance, on the experience of the sense of touch, of "feeling," so also, and especially, does the knowledge of all being have a corporeal origin; in no other way do we feel the being of God, and thereby recognize him as powerful, than in our feeling the being of all other beings and hence recognizing the power of this being.

That the "metaphysical" conviction of the greater power over us of a world that resists us and is independent of us is only, as it were, an accidental byproduct of what is actually meant as a purely "methodical" and "phenomenalistic" physics, is evidently implausible. The exact opposite is, from the outset, much more plausible; namely, that Hobbes was led astray from *more fundamental* "materialism" *subsequently*, and indeed above all by Descartes, and he was forced into "phenomenalism." That this is in fact the case is shown when one compares the proof of God that Hobbes advances in his confrontation with Descartes with the proof of God as he presents it in all his other writings. Everywhere else,²⁸⁶ he proves the existence of God by reasoning back from the observed corporeal effects to their ultimate cause. In his *Objectiones* to the *Meditationes*, by contrast—obviously induced by Descartes's "ideological" proof of God—he reasons back from the *ideas* to their ultimate cause, that is, to God.²⁸⁷ If, therefore, "materialism," and not "phenomenalism," is Hobbes's original conviction, which characteristically distinguishes him from Descartes, then the force of the possibility that pre-occupied Descartes—that the existence of the world could be feigned for us by a *Deus deceptor*—breaks down, not primarily because of the possibility of remaining within the absolutely certain domain of consciousness, but because of the undoubted assumption that we men are completely dependent on a world that reveals itself as real through its resistance.

One must keep this fact in mind if one is to understand correctly Hobbes's criticism of Descartes's refutation of a *Deus deceptor*. Hobbes claims, against Descartes, that the possibility of deception by God cannot be excluded *in principle*; he opposes an a priori argumentation that is supposed to show, on the basis of a supposed knowledge of God's essence, that God cannot

statements comes out in Descartes's letter to Mersenne concerning Hobbes of January 21, 1641: "Omitto initium [sc. of a now-lost letter from Hobbes] de anima et Deo corporeis" [I omit the beginning about corporeal soul and God].

286. *Elements of Law* 1.11.2, *Leviathan*, chap. 12 (76–77); *De homine* 12.5.

287. *Opera Latina*, 5:260.—That the "phenomenalism" appeared later than the "materialism" is stressed by Tönnies in his *Anmerkungen über Philosophie des Hobbes, Vierteljahrsschrift für wissenschaftliche Philosophie* 3, no. 2 (1879): 72f. Regarding the (likely) influence of Descartes on the development of Hobbes's "phenomenalism," cf. Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Georg Misch (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1914), 2:372.

want to deceive; precisely thereby, the possibility of an a posteriori critique is left open. In fact—although without giving an account of it—Descartes also delivers such an a posteriori critique. For the fact that I can doubt, and thereby protect myself against deception on the part of the omnipotent demon, already contradicts the possibility, which is presupposed, that I am in the hands of an omnipotent deceiver: an omnipotent deceiver would have known how to prevent the emergence of this doubt. Now, Hobbes does not need to present the a posteriori critique of the possibility of a *Deus deceptor* in this form at all; to him, the resistance of the world vouches for the fact that the existence of the world is not merely feigned for us. But since he does not deny the *Deus deceptor* argument even allusively, and since, on the other hand, he does not doubt the existence, which is called into question by that argument, of “things in themselves,” it follows in any case that for him the possibility of a *Deus deceptor* is not a possibility that threatens philosophy. But how, then, is one to understand the ambiguous sympathy that he shows for the *Deus deceptor* argument by not (?)^{*} calling into question Descartes’s refutation of the same argument? We have seen that Hobbes differs from Descartes first and foremost in his denial of the possibility of a rational theology; he justifies this denial through the proposition that God is plainly incomprehensible; this means, however, that he does so through a proposition that Descartes affirms with the same tendency against the theological tradition as Hobbes. On the basis of this theological agreement, one can explain Hobbes’s ambiguous sympathy for the *Deus deceptor* argument. For the possibility of a *Deus deceptor* is only a peculiarly pointed expression of the possibility of a fully incomprehensible God;²⁸⁸ and insofar as it is not meant to be more than the symbolization of that possibility, Hobbes is prepared, not merely to accept it, but even to advocate it. But if it were, in effect, not merely a possible symbolization of the full incomprehensibility of God, but its most radical, that is, its most *pessimistic* expression, then Hobbes must turn against it. For against the backdrop of the possibility of a God who treats men with complete indifference and is in no way concerned about them, the reckoning with the possibility of a God who “has put all his industriousness therein in order to deceive me”²⁸⁹ proves to be a mere inversion of the belief in *providence*, and hence as *illusory* as that belief. Above all, however, the

^{*} Noted with pencil in the margin as an insertion: not (?).—EDS.

288. Cf. on this Krüger, *Die Herkunft des philosophischen Selbstbewusstseins*, 246–50 (pp. 231–36 in the previously cited translation).

289. *Meditationes* (Paris: 1641), 15.

resistance that the world opposes to my force vouches for the fact that its existence is not merely feigned. Not the existence of the world, but solely the *comprehensibility* of the self-evidently existing world, is problematic for Hobbes. For insofar as the world is created by a simply incomprehensible God, it must itself be incomprehensible. Hence, Hobbes confronts, not the possibility of a *Deus deceptor*, but the much more uncontrived,* much less vague, much more threatening, and much *more credible* possibility that the world is the incomprehensible work of a simply incomprehensible God. It is precisely for this reason that the retreat into consciousness is not the foundation of philosophy for him. For the retreat into consciousness may be a sufficient protection against a *Deus deceptor*; it cannot, however, help me in a positive way with an orientation in a world that is completely incomprehensible.

Hobbes confronts only the possibility that the world is the incomprehensible work of a simply incomprehensible God. We therefore stand again at the point from which we followed Hobbes's founding of science, which at first sight shows a striking affinity with Descartes's founding of science. In the meantime, it has turned out to be the case that Hobbes proceeds from fully un-Cartesian presuppositions. What must now be investigated is whether, and to what extent, these presuppositions that are peculiar to Hobbes are the basis of his critique of religion.

c. The Basis of Hobbes's Critique of Religion

This basis is *not* "phenomenalism"; the "phenomenalist" thesis hardly appears in the writings of Hobbes devoted to the critique of religion; it is in any case of no significance for his critique of religion. The presupposition that Hobbes steadily makes use of in his critique of religion is rather "materialism," the monism of substances (see p. 64, above). But even "materialism" is not the basis of the Hobbesian critique of religion; for even materialism is not original but rather the product of the scientific elaboration of the pre-

* The word *unvorgreiflich* appears to be almost obsolete in modern German. It was used by Leibniz, in the title to his work *Unvorgreifliche Gedanken, betreffend die Ausübung und Verbesserung der Teutschen Sprache*, which was first printed in 1717. The various suggestions English-speaking scholars make for translating *unvorgreiflich* in the title of this work—the work itself does not appear to have been translated—range from "Provisional" to "Disinterested" to "Humble" to the definition one might be more inclined to expect, since the meaning of the verb *vorgreifen* is "to anticipate": "unanticipated." The meaning here is close to "unsophisticated" or "uncontrived"—TRANS.

scientific concept of body. The presupposition in light of which Hobbes's critique of religion is presented in its original form is, rather, the articulation of being into resistant and nonresistant (into "bodies" and "spirits"). This articulation of being, which is done away with by "materialism," has in turn an original presupposition that even "materialism" cannot completely supersede. For this articulation of being means an articulation of being with respect to the resistance that it gives to our effort to work on it by acting. This means, however, that underlying the articulation of being into the resistant and the nonresistant is a fundamental articulation, on the one hand, of the being that we—the *men* who assert ourselves against the world by acting—are, and, on the other hand, of the being against which we assert ourselves, the world. And this articulation always remained decisive for Hobbes.²⁹⁰

The articulation of being into man and nature is the condition for the possibility of the articulation of nature into the resistant and nonresistant, into "bodies" and "spirits." "Materialism" emerges through the critique of the prescientific idea of body, as a consequence of which nature as a whole is understood as corporeal. But "phenomenalism" is also present in Hobbes's fundamental presupposition. For in the articulation of being into man and nature, man is understood as the sort of being that has, *in itself*, the images of being,²⁹¹ as a being that has at its disposal an "inner world," the world of its representations, and that can withdraw from the "outer world" into its "inner world." "Phenomenalism" and "materialism" both have their origin in Hobbes's fundamental presupposition that *we men are in the power of a resistant world, but in such a way that we can withdraw from this world into our inner world*.

Hobbes's fundamental critique of religion consists in his confrontation, carried out on the basis of this presupposition, with the possibility that the world is the work of a simply incomprehensible God and is therefore not only resistant and overpowering but also fully incomprehensible. As a consequence of this possibility, every orientation in the world becomes radically problematic. In what fact does Hobbes find protection against this threat, protection against the God of revelation?

Not in the fact of an ordered *nature*, which, although it might depend completely on the incomprehensible will of God, would itself nevertheless be comprehensible to a certain degree (see above, p. 91). For natural operations, as operations of an incomprehensible God, are precisely as incompre-

290. Naturall causes and manners of men. Cf. *Leviathan*, 468. Cf. the dropping out [*Weg-fallen*] of biology.

291. *De corpore*.

hensible as miracles are. It is not the fact of nature as a comprehensible order that lies, for Hobbes, at the basis of every possible orientation in the world, but the fact of *art*: while the works of nature are incomprehensible in principle, the works of art are comprehensible in principle (*Leviathan* 300b–301t; cf. Descartes, *Discours*, p. 56 [Gilson ed.]). The fact of art, therefore, is the basis to which Hobbes withdraws in defense against the possibility that the world is the work of an incomprehensible God.

The fact of art is authoritative for Hobbes's philosophy. For this philosophy is a philosophy of civilization: it wants to contribute to the securing and the advancement of civilization through knowledge of the conditions of civilization; the characteristic of civilization, that is, the characteristic difference between civilization and barbarism, however, is that the former has at its disposal incomparably more and more highly developed arts than the latter (cf., e.g., *Leviathan* 89, *De corpore* 1.6–7, *De cive*, epistle dedicatory). With the orientation toward civilization, and therefore toward the arts, we are given the distinction between what is by nature and what is produced by art; this distinction, according to Hobbes, is the ultimate division of being generally and thereby of the sciences of being: philosophy falls into 2 parts, *philosophia naturalis* [natural philosophy], whose object is the natural bodies, and *philosophia civilis* [civil or political philosophy], whose object is the artificially produced body of the state (*De corpore* 1.9 and *De homine*, epistle dedicatory). The distinction between being by nature and being by art, however, does not account only for the division of philosophy into *philosophia naturalis* and *philosophia civilis*; beyond that, it determines the internal structure of *philosophia civilis* itself; for *philosophia civilis* is subdivided into the teaching about *status naturalis*, i.e., about the state in which man finds himself by nature, and the teaching about *status civilis*, i.e., about the state itself, which man himself produces. (Cf. the plan of *De cive*, but also of *Elements of Law* and *Leviathan*.)

By "art," in the context of his critique of religion, Hobbes understands nothing but the human capacity to bring about useful effects on the basis of reflection, that is, a capacity that not only does not necessarily presuppose scientific training but that is even essentially prescientific. Art so understood is a matter of "prudence," of "experience" (cf. *Leviathan*, chaps. 10–11), of *sound common sense* [*der gesunde Menschenverstand*].* Sound common sense shows up not only, and not primarily, in the arts but also and above

* This German phrase, usually translated as "sound common sense," may be rendered more literally as "healthy human understanding"—TRANS.

all in dealing with men, as knowledge of the nature and interests of men.²⁹² Sound common sense, characterized on the one hand by the arts and on the other hand by the knowledge of men, carries out the founding of the critique of religion.

The center of the critique of religion is the critique of miracles. The ultimate presupposition of the assertion of miracles is the belief that God can simply do anything, that the works of God are hence simply incomprehensible. Over and against the threat emanating from this belief to the original security of his orientation in the world, man finds his first protection in remembering that he understands that which he himself produces, i.e., in remembering art. When man has secured his orientation in the world by remembering art, he is in the position to take steps against the claim of belief that there are miracles. This claim presents itself, *in concreto* [concretely], as a demand placed on man that allegedly rests on a divine commandment and whose divine origin becomes credible through miracles. In order to understand the critique of this demand on the part of sound common sense, one must first clarify, beginning from Hobbes's explicit explanations, how sound common sense would generally conduct itself in the face of demands. Led by sound common sense, the "reasonable and prudent" man is concerned with utility and advantage, that is, with the goods of the senses (*De cive* 1.2). He acknowledges a demand on himself—that is, a demand, in each case, on his comfort, if not indeed on his purse—only if it is based on an exchange that is useful to him. Concerning the utility of the service he is himself judge: he himself can of course judge, for example, whether the table that the carpenter supplied to him fulfills its purpose or not; besides, he himself knows, or can find out at any time, out of what materials, and by means of what operations the carpenter produced the table, and thus whether the price is appropriate. In the case of a demand based on a miracle, he cannot recognize an advantage for himself. The suspicion occurs to him that the demand is unfair [*unbillig*]. Hence, he asks himself, *cui bono?* [to whose benefit?] (*Leviathan* 474[–478]). Who has the advantage in fulfilling this demand? Nothing is more plausible than the supposition that the man who performs or announces the miracle has the advantage in it; for even he, since he is a man, does everything that he does for the sake of his advantage. The suspicion against the miracle worker grows ever greater, not only because the demands based on miracles are in general substantially greater than other demands, and not only because there is no recognizable advantage that arises

292. "Manners of men"—moreover, the self-standing character of political science.

from the fulfillment of the demand, no advantage for the man to whom the demand based on a miracle is directed, but also because the way in which the miracle comes about is inscrutable. Now there are three modes of sound common sense: (1) intelligence and foresight; (2) the deficient mode of unintelligence and lack of foresight; (3) the shrewdness, i.e., intelligence and foresight, that, standing at a halfway point, finds itself ready to make use of unjust or ignoble means, or, in other words, of *deception* (cf. *Leviathan*, chap. 35, para. 2). Hence, within the horizon of sound common sense, the following explanation of miracles presents itself: a "miracle" is a deception by which the shrewd deceive the unintelligent—either a conjurer's trick or a real artistic achievement that can be displayed as a miracle for deceptive purposes.

Hobbes is not the first to have made art the foundation of the philosophical orientation. It had the same decisive significance for the reflection of the sophists, on the one hand, and of Socrates and Plato, on the other, and it thence became decisive for the entire philosophical tradition. This fundamental agreement makes intelligible the fact that an essential part of the medieval critique of miracles, founded on the presupposition of classical philosophy, recurs, in completely unaltered form, in Hobbes's critique of religion.²⁹³ One part of the critique of miracles—the critique on the basis of sound common sense—is the *first stage* of Hobbes's critique of miracles.

However important this agreement is, the difference that separates Hobbes's conception of "art" from the traditional conception is even more important for the understanding of Hobbes's proper presupposition. Since "art" and "nature" are strictly correlated, the meaning of "art" must be changed radically if the meaning of "nature" has been changed radically. The philosophical tradition rejected by Hobbes understands art as imitation, or improvement, of nature (cf. Aristotle, *Physics* 2.8, paragraph 5 and *Leviathan*, chap. 7); it presupposes precisely thereby that nature is an (intelligible) order. Now, if one claims the historical incomprehensibility of nature, as Hobbes does, art can no longer be the imitation of nature; art loses its natural model; it turns into a model-less, sovereign invention. But even if, or rather, all the more because art remains the decisive fact for the philosophical orientation, art now has this significance for a different reason than hitherto: art is the criterion of evidence for Hobbes for a different reason from that of the tradition. The evidence of art is generally grounded in the fact that the artisan *knows* what he does excellently. But this knowledge can be understood

293. Kraus [See n. 244 above—TRANS.].

in an entirely different way. For the originator of the tradition, for Socrates-Plato, the knowledge that is decisive for the artisan is turning-one's-gaze-away-toward-something, namely, toward a form, an *order*, which he wants to reproduce. And the knowledge of the artisan is therefore excellent because knowledge of the form or order through which and for the sake of which each thing is what it is is genuine knowledge. (Cf. *Gorgias* 503e–504a with *Phaedo*, *Republic*.)

ADDENDA

Two Passages Deleted from the Manuscript



ADDENDUM TO PAGE 81

b. The Possibility of Revelation and of Miracles

More noteworthy than Hobbes's denial of the resurrection and the existence of angels is his tacit rejection of the concept of God, which lies at the basis of his critique of the tradition. What is shown in this rejection is, precisely the fundamental opposition between the *radical* enlightenment, whose most significant representative is Hobbes himself, and the *moderate* enlightenment, among which, at least within certain limits, the Socinians and the Deists are to be counted. The concept of God, on the basis of which the moderate enlightenment struggles against the tradition, is characterized by the distinct [*eindeutig*] primacy of *compassionate goodness*; it is therefore in the spirit of the moderate enlightenment that Hobbes, in the context of his critique of the tradition, rejects the teaching of eternal punishment in hell by appealing to the mercifulness of God.¹ Characteristic of the radical enlightenment's concept of God is the distinct primacy of *absolute power*, and accordingly, speech about the wisdom, goodness, and justice of God loses all meaning. In accordance with the meaning of what is for him the truly authoritative concept of God, Hobbes says that the actual basis in right [*Rechtsgrund*] of all human

1. See above, pp. 67f.

suffering is not the sins of men but the irresistible power of God: God can make men suffer as he likes, even when men do not sin, without thereby doing them wrong;² he can thus, in particular, without being unjust, inflict eternal suffering on men, even if they do not deserve this suffering in the least. Not the *essential* mercifulness and goodness of God, but the pure arbitrariness of his decree—in *actual fact*, Scripture teaches nothing about eternal punishment—provides a safeguard [*sichert*] against the traditional teaching of eternal punishment in hell.³ There can be no doubt that this train of thought is an *argumentatio ad hominem*; but at least it does not stand, as the critique of eternal punishment in hell with recourse to the goodness and mercifulness of God does, in open contradiction to what is for Hobbes the authoritative theology.⁴

NOTE TO PAGE 91, PARAGRAPH 1

Hobbes acknowledges the “truth” of the First Meditation without any reservation. The only objection that he raises concerns not the *truth* but the *originality* of the First Meditation: *nolim excellentissimum autorem novarum speculationum illa vetera publicare* [I am sorry that the most excellent author of new speculations is publishing these old things] (*Opera Latina* 5.51).

2. *Leviathan*, chap. 31 (247f.).

3. “Cur autem, si Deus in causa [sc. peccati] est, condemnatur nos? Responde mihi, qui sic rogas, cur Deus ab aeterno alios elegit, alios reprobavit, et quomodo ad poenas aeternas maximeque condemnavit eos, qui malum nondum aut fecerant aut cogitaverant, nec nisi Deo volente et vim praebente, facere aut cogitare potuerunt? Responde etiam, an figulo de vase, quod finxit, non sit licitum statuere quicquid vult? Indica denique, ubi Scripturae aperte dicant, omnes illos, qui a regno Dei excluduntur, victuros esse sine morte secunda cruciandos in aeternum.” [Why, then, if God is the cause (i.e., of sin), are we condemned? Answer me, you who ask this, why God, from eternity, has elected some, has rejected others, and in what way he has condemned to eternal and great punishments those who had as yet neither done, nor thought, nor, unless God wills this and offers forth the power, could have been able to do or think evil? Answer, furthermore, whether it is not lawful for the potter to determine whatever he wants about the vase he has formed? Then point out where the Scriptures openly say that all those who are excluded from the kingdom of God are to live without a second death being tortured to eternity.] *Opera Latina*, 3:501.

4. Cf. Leibniz's position in his *Réflexions sur le livre de Hobbes* . . . §8: “il paraît en effet que suivant le sentiment de cet auteur, Dieu n'a point de bonté” [it appears, in effect, that according to the opinion of this author, God has no degree of goodness]. Cf. also §12: “cette opinion [sc. de Hobbes] qui dépouille Dieu de toute bonté et de tout justice véritable, qui le représente comme un tyran, usant d'un pouvoir absolu, indépendant de tout droit et de toute équité” [this opinion (i.e., of Hobbes), which despoils God of all goodness and of all true justice, which represents him as a tyrant, using absolute power, independently of all right and all equity].

Contesting the originality is completely justified (and Descartes himself concedes this unabashedly in his *Responsio*) when it comes to the first two arguments, which are the only ones mentioned by Hobbes—(1) *incertitudo sensibilibium* [uncertainty of the senses]; (2) *difficultas dignoscendi vigiliam ab insomniis* [difficulty of distinguishing awakesness from dreams])—but not at all justified when it comes to the third, decisive argument, the *Deus deceptor* argument, about which Hobbes does not say a word. Does he leave it unmentioned because he regards it as invalid? This is not plausible, since, as the character of his whole critique shows, he would never miss an opportunity to convict Descartes of an error. Does he leave it unmentioned because it made no impression on him, as though he did not notice it? Then since he acknowledges the truth of the First Meditation without any reservation, he must have regarded the two other arguments as sufficient for justifying universal doubt. But this is not at all the case; in truth, the third argument is thus decisive for Hobbes as well. However—and this “however” finds expression, in a veiled manner, in his critique of the first two arguments, namely, that they are “old,” not original—the third argument is the only original argument of Descartes (cf. Krüger, *ibid.*). It is on the basis of this fact, as it seems to us, that one must understand Hobbes’s remarkable critique of the First Meditation. The two philosophers ended up a little later in a conflict over who came first regarding the mechanical explanation of nature, which at the outset made a substantive confrontation more difficult and even completely impossible (cf., in this connection, Fr. Brandt, *Thomas Hobbes’ mechanical conception of nature*, Copenhagen/London, 1928, 132ff.). While in this conflict Hobbes could, in good conscience and, what is more, with an appeal to witnesses, claim his independence of Descartes, the matter is different regarding the founding of science by means of a retreat into consciousness: here Descartes’s priority—that is, the priority of *Discours de la méthode*, in which the consideration of doubt is advanced, even with the omission of the *Deus-deceptor* argument, to the *Elements*—is indisputable. Here there was no other option for Hobbes, who was hardly less concerned with his originality than was Descartes, but to depreciate Descartes’s consideration of doubt as banal, as well-known. But he could do this only by not engaging Descartes’s original argumentation at all. But if, in addition, he had rejected the first two arguments (*illa vetera* [those old things]) as inadequate, he would have called into question the foundation on which he had already begun to construct the science of nature.

SHORTER WRITINGS
BY STRAUSS ON HOBBS



SOME NOTES ON THE POLITICAL SCIENCE OF HOBBS (1932)



I

At a moment when, in the opinion of many, liberalism and liberal democracy have failed conclusively and, in the opinion of no fewer, "intellectual probity" speaks as much against the idea of an integral restoration of earlier forms of rule based on their claim of divine right as against the Bolshevik doctrine, the interest of those who cannot rest content with half solutions must turn with a certain necessity to the political science of Hobbes. For Hobbes was "absolutiste sans être théologien" [an absolutist without being a theologian] (Bréhier) or even, if one dare say it, without being a theist or "religious" in general. And that he offers no half solutions is vouched for by the rigor and consistency of his thought, which is not denied even by his keenest opponents.

However legitimate the critique made today to some extent everywhere against liberalism and liberal democracy, even if that critique is partly or fully unjustified, it has nevertheless changed the situation of liberalism fundamentally. For today for the first time liberalism confronts a critique that is not simply "reactionary" and is even less one that leaves the first principles of liberalism uncontested, as does the socialist critique, and to that extent—for

This article was written for Z. Lubieński's book *The Foundations of Hobbes's Ethical-Political System* (Munich: Reinhardt, 1932).

all the opposition as to final consequences—represents a merely immanent critique of liberalism. Therefore, if liberalism wants to affirm itself, it is compelled to engage in a more radical justification than ever before in its history. For in its beginnings it could appeal—legitimately or illegitimately, but in any case with success—to certain presuppositions that lay at the basis of the religious tradition combated by liberalism, on which it agreed with its opponent and which thus made this opponent open to an attack by liberalism; but precisely as a result of the success of liberalism, these presuppositions are today no longer self-evident, so that liberalism might appeal to them against its new opponents. If, then, one is to provide a radical justification for liberalism, i.e., a justification that does not engage in open or secret borrowings from the religious tradition, one finds oneself again referred back to Hobbes's political science. For Hobbes was precisely the first to provide this justification, and with a radicalness that has never again been achieved. This claim appears paradoxical at first sight, but actually only at first sight. When one looks more closely, one discovers in Hobbes's teaching the characteristic presuppositions and claims of liberalism. It suffices to remember in this respect that the egalitarian principle underlies all of his arguments; that the natural right taught by him fully possesses the character of an inalienable human right; that the opposition between a military and an industrial state of human society, with the latter unambiguously affirmed, is expressed by him with sufficient clarity (cf. *Elements*, part 1, 19.2 and *De cive* 5.2 with *De cive* 1.2 and 13.14); one should recall his denial—on the basis of the egalitarian principle—of paternal, and affirmation of maternal, power over the child and the complete equality of rights of the sexes that is recognized thereby as a given; his teaching about civil marriage and the dispensability of oaths; his ideas about university governance and—above all—his critique of religion. His espousal of absolutism does not at all contradict his liberalism, nor does it at all make the latter suspect, but is evidence only that he had a clear view of how great is the resistance that liberalism has to fight its way through, resistance not only from the old powers of the Church and the feudal state but above all from human nature itself. After all, it would not be so difficult to find other examples that would show that every time liberalism must prevail or is threatened, it reverts to its absolutist beginnings. Hobbes's absolutism is in the end nothing but militant liberalism *in statu nascendi* [in the state of being born], i.e., in its most radical form. In this sense Hobbes is the founder of liberalism; and hence whoever wishes to engage in either a radical justification or a radical critique of liberalism must return to Hobbes.

While Hobbes is the founder of liberalism, he is not yet a liberal in the proper sense of the word; but that is precisely why he can open up possibilities of which liberalism is less aware than was Hobbes or of which it is no longer aware at all and which could have significance even if, as its opponents claim, liberalism has really failed conclusively.

The "relevance" of Hobbes's political science—which, as we believe, is increasingly pronounced, and which thus consists in our being able to learn something of importance *from* Hobbes as a teacher and not merely *about* him as an object of study, something that we need and cannot learn from our contemporaries—places an obligation on the interpreter to pay the most careful attention not to interject into Hobbes's teaching opinions that prevail or threaten to prevail today. For any such modification of the "historical fact" would from the outset deprive the study of Hobbes's politics of any possible use that such a study might have, precisely for the clarification of today's political opinions. It is truly not worth the effort to open these old books only to find in them opinions with which one can readily become acquainted from so many public speeches and private conversations of our contemporaries, if indeed one has not already known them for a while from these easily available sources.

It is thus precisely on the assumption that Hobbes's politics is of eminent relevance that one must require this doctrine to be unfolded with full scholastic rigor, and without any confusing side glances toward today's opinions. From this point of view, one will be favorably disposed toward the book by Mr. Z. Lubieński, *The Foundations of Hobbes's Ethical-Political System* (Munich: Ernst Reinhardt Press, 1932), since one need only leaf through the book to become convinced that the book is written with a purely scientific intention. And one needs to read only a little of it in order to notice that it is completely untouched by the spiritual [*geistig*] and political movement that so stirred the country in which the book appeared in the year of its appearance. It therefore seems somewhat "old-fashioned" and thus even at the outset gives the impression of integrity and independence. Under these circumstances, one trusts the author to keep the promise that he makes, namely, that he will give a "completely new solution" to the central problems of the study of Hobbes, a solution "that diverges in great part from the previous conclusions" (15).

In order to judge of the newness of his solution, one must keep in mind the results of the previous studies of Hobbes; and in order to recognize whether the new solution is of principal significance, one must remember the principal problems in the interpretation of Hobbes.

II

Everyone who has read Hobbes praises the rigor, consistency, and intrepidity of his thought; and everyone who studies him is always surprised by the numerous contradictions that one finds in his writings. There are not many of his characteristic theses that he does not retract elsewhere in his writings, apparently or really, directly or through the negation of their consequences. One therefore requires a rule of interpretation that would allow the interpreter to decide with the greatest possible certainty, in the frequent cases of contradictory statements by the philosopher, which of the mutually contradictory propositions expresses the philosopher's true view.

Now, one could think that one has already found this rule in that first impression of the rigor of Hobbes's thought, which is naturally not simply false. This impression is based on the characteristic claims of Hobbes, which *must* strike all readers, and which are therefore known to everyone as Hobbesian, and which one needs only to put together in order to grasp them clearly: these propositions reveal a unified, single, and indivisible fundamental outlook [*Grundgesinnung*]* that expresses a *single* fundamental will; and this impression is so strong that the observation of the numerous contradictions in Hobbes's writings cannot stand against it. We do not shy away from enumerating once again these characteristic propositions: the uninterrupted, restless, ever-growing striving for power and honor and ever greater power and honor as a general inclination of all men; the impossibility of *beatitudo* [bliss]; the denial of science as a goal in itself: *scientia propter potentiam* [science for the sake of power]; the restriction of science to the investigation of material and efficient causes; the denial of the natural sociality of man; the state of nature as a war of all against all; the state as an artificial creation; the primacy of natural right, i.e., of claim, over natural law, i.e., over obligation; the coincidence of the social contract with the contract of subordination; the absolute sovereignty of the supreme power and the rejection of the separation of powers; the preference for monarchy; the subordination of the church to the state, and therefore of the eternal to the temporal. To analyze the single and indivisible outlook [*Gesinnung*] out of which the enumerated theses result—this and nothing else is the task of the interpretation of Hobbes.

Yet it is not sufficient for this interpretation to demonstrate by the highest evidence the inner connection among the characteristic theses; rather, one

* For instances of Strauss's use of *Gesinnung*, see pp. 65f.—TRANS.

should not for a moment disregard the connection among these theses *as it has been established by Hobbes himself*. Once one has gone, as one must, into the details of Hobbes's *arguments* in support of his theses—for these arguments are the connection, established by Hobbes himself, among his ideas—the vivid and captivating impression that one had received at first glance, without which impression the analysis of Hobbes's teaching would be with no direction at all, turns out to be an inadequate rule; for this impression gives us no indication as to which of two mutually contradictory arguments should be regarded as authoritative. One therefore requires a more specific rule of interpretation, one that is better suited to the concrete character of the contradictions in question.

Such a rule can be found only if these contradictions are not accidental but typical. One can anticipate at the outset, and then confirm by analysis, that this is so; the analysis shows that Hobbes's philosophy is determined by two contradictory *tendencies* that have not been brought into harmony by Hobbes and that *cannot* be brought into harmony by anyone. The interpreter who finds a unified understanding of Hobbes's politics, an understanding that corresponds to the first and leading impression, must therefore face a choice: he must openly and explicitly eliminate one of the two mutually contradictory tendencies in order to reconstruct—relying only on the other tendency, and in the terms of that tendency—the unity of Hobbes's politics, which the latter glimpsed but never reached. But it is clear at the outset which tendency one must eliminate and which tendency must be made the basis of interpretation: the interpretation must be based on the authentic tendency that is characteristic of Hobbes and must abstract from the tendency that is merely *traditional*, against which Hobbes turned and from which (with greater or lesser success) he tried to liberate himself, as is shown by the untraditional, indeed antitraditional, tendency that is characteristic of him.

The difficulty begins as soon as one tries to define the traditional and original tendency concretely. Mr. Lubieński, who follows the other scholars in this respect (32 n.), assumes that Hobbes's intention was to philosophize in the spirit of modern, Galilean science, but that he did not always, and did not generally, follow through on this intention because he was still too much under the spell of the Aristotelian-scholastic science that he was in principle combating. But one cannot leave it at this determination. Dilthey had pointed to Hobbes's "dependence" on the Roman Stoa,* and

* Strauss has crossed out: "Yet Hobbes is not only not a Stoic but stands in keen opposition to the Stoa"—EDS.

Mr. Lubieński underscores Hobbes's "dependence" on Plato (in particular, 222–28). How do these "dependences" relate to Hobbes's "dependence" on the Aristotelian-scholastic tradition? Is it perhaps the case that Hobbes goes back to Plato as against the Aristotelian tradition? Does he really go back to Plato or was he caught up only in the tradition of Platonism? And is one generally entitled to distinguish between Plato and Aristotle in studying Hobbes's relations to the tradition? The enumeration of questions that impose themselves here and that must be answered if one is to arrive at a secure and unified interpretation of his teaching could be extended even further; we restrict ourselves to the observation that Mr. Lubieński does not pose these questions even once. He attributes the "rationalism" that prevents Hobbes's naturalistic, "empirico-critical" traditional intention from coming to full realization to an entanglement in the Aristotelian-scholastic tradition, and he recognizes Hobbes's dependence on Plato precisely with respect to "rationalism"; he does not even make an attempt to clarify the connection between these two facts.

Mr. Lubieński does not pose to himself the question of the relation of Hobbes's politics to the tradition as it must be posed: namely, as the question whose answer is the indispensable presupposition of an interpretation. This question cannot therefore take on the importance for him that is appropriate to it because he thinks "that the defects that have emerged through the contradiction [sc. within Hobbes's politics] between ancient and modern ideas represent wholly insignificant remnants" (33). We do not need to examine this opinion, which is not only essentially false but also, as would follow from a closer look, incomprehensible; it suffices that with respect to the central part of Hobbes's politics, the teaching on obligation, Mr. Lubieński himself speaks of "Hobbes's *constant wavering* between subjective and objective grounds of morality" and that he himself attributes this wavering to Hobbes's "main error," namely, the attempt to unite the traditional and the modern conception.

III

Mr. Lubieński claims to provide "a wholly new solution, in great part diverging from previous conclusions," of the central problems of Hobbes interpretation (15). He arrives at this solution* by shifting the concept of obligation to the center of the study and "by presenting its close connection

* Strauss has crossed out: "result"—EDS.

with the principle of Hobbes's mechanistic psychology" (15). This definition of the task—understanding Hobbes's politics as a *naturalistic* teaching on *obligation*—no doubt accords with the meaning of many, not to say most, explicit and programmatic statements Hobbes makes about his *intention*. It is clear, however, that this alone does not guarantee the feasibility of the task; for it is quite thinkable that the *execution* of Hobbes's politics can belie its intention. And supposing that the task Mr. Lubieński sets for himself were feasible, it remains to ask whether the authentic interpretation is also the most appropriate one. Mr. Lubieński is ready "to recognize with Tönnies that [Hobbes's] natural-scientific investigations matured in his mind much later than did his political and social views." Whatever may have been "the skillfulness with which he combined the latter with the psycho-physical elements of his teaching, he is to be credited with the glory of being one of the first representatives of the naturalistic direction in ethics and the science of the state" (31)—in any case, Hobbes conceived his view of man and of the state independently of natural science and *only subsequently* attempted to ground it in a natural-scientific way. Is it therefore not possible to understand his political science completely independently of a consideration of the subsequent natural-scientific founding [*Begründung*]? Has he not himself explicitly asserted many times the independence of political science from natural science? The suggested possibility becomes a necessity when one points out that Hobbes's deepest anthropological and political thoughts are obscured rather than clarified by the subsequent natural-scientific founding (not to mention that naturalism as such is at the end not so "natural" that one does not also have to ask about its human roots, which are not themselves already scientific). Accordingly, it is not at all self-evident, as Mr. Lubieński assumes, that one must base the interpretation of Hobbes's politics above all on the "most mature" presentations, and thus in particular on *Leviathan* (15); for perhaps it is in the most mature presentations that the roots of the new views of man and state are most "skillfully" withdrawn from view.

However that may be, so many unambiguous texts argue for the attempt to understand Hobbesian politics as a natural-scientific teaching on obligations that he is in any case allowed to undertake that attempt. And so in any case one must congratulate Mr. Lubieński for setting his task precisely. Let us see how he fulfills it.

His study of the "first foundations of Hobbes's ethical system" (46–48) arrives at this result: according to Hobbes the good is "life advancement [*Lebensförderung*]" while "the norm of a universally valid ethics" is "the preservation of life." This distinction conceals the important insight that Hobbes obtained the principle of ethics through a *restriction* of a more

fundamental fact and that this more fundamental fact cannot “represent a foundation for the construction of a universally valid ethics” (55). *First*, however, the question is whether one reproduces Hobbes’s view correctly in saying that the good is “life advancement.” For even granting that Mr. Lubieński is right to claim that according to Hobbes the good is neither pleasure nor self-preservation (50–57) and that instead “Hobbes subordinates that feeling of pleasure to another good, namely, the enhancement of vital [sc. that located in the heart] motion, of which that feeling is only a sign,” one should still say that the testified* and unambiguous expression “enhancement of vital motion” is something other than the vague expression “life advancement,” which in the sense meant by Mr. Lubieński cannot be found in Hobbes. The expression “life advancement” is thus to be rejected especially because it could mislead us into evading the task of deriving obligation out of premoral facts—certainly a task that a *naturalistic* theory of obligation must in all cases attempt to fulfill—in that from the outset one understands “life advancement” as “all human activity and hence all moral actions” (62) and therefore one certainly does not proceed from a truly naturalistic principle. The utmost one can say is that according to Hobbes the good is the enhancement of vital motion; once the claim has been made more precise in this way, all the central texts will be in agreement with it. For if the good is only what enhances vital motion, one says thereby: all true goods are goods of the senses; either spiritual goods are means for attaining goods of the senses (*ad sensuale conducentia*) or they are vain, that is, identical with the pleasure of vanity. Hobbes expresses this view clearly in *De cive* 1.2. (As Mr. Lubieński himself implicitly grants on p. 241, it is on the basis of this passage, as well as *De corpore* 1.6, that one must also interpret the single passage that Mr. Lubieński cites that appears to allow going beyond the definition of the good as an enhancement of vital motion, namely, *De homine* 9.9.) *Second*, against Mr. Lubieński’s presentation one could object that he believes he can define “the good,” that is, the “real good” (53), *before* he has made clear “the norm of a universally valid ethics.” No doubt the question about this norm is not the first question of Hobbes’s ethics; but this is not to say that his first question is the question of the real good. It emerges unambiguously out of one of the passages in the dedicatory letter of *De cive*, which is referred to by Mr. Lubieński, that the discovery of the “norm of a universally valid ethics” precedes the clarification of the goal of *cupiditas naturalis* [natural desire]. Now, Mr. Lubieński certainly identifies the real

* I.e., used by Hobbes himself: i.e., “quickenings” of “vital motion”—TRANS.

good with the goal of *cupiditas naturalis*. But this is in no way justified by the fact that desire aims at the good, as Mr. Lubieński suggests on p. 48; for the question is precisely whether the good at which desire aims is the *real* good. One cannot deny that Hobbes answers the question in the negative; in his view (cf. the passage from the dedicatory letter of *De cive* quoted on p. 88, as well as *De cive* 3.31f.), *cupiditas naturalis* stands in *opposition* to *ratio naturalis* [natural reason] which alone is capable of recognizing the real good. Desire is in any case prerational; in fact, "the norm of universal ethics" is obtained through the restriction of the prerational, and thereby premoral, basic fact, from which fact, in its prerationality, one must begin if one is to make clear Hobbes's founding [*Grundlegung*] of morality. When one asks about the good at which natural desire aims, in other words, about the natural ideal of happiness, one can, to begin with in any case, answer no differently than did Tönnies: this goal is the least obstructed progress in the acquisition of power and honor. Mr. Lubieński objects to this conception that "the striving for power and honor . . . is nowhere established as the final goal in itself" (60). To be sure, according to Hobbes the striving for power and honor is not "the final goal *in itself*"; however, the least obstructed progress in the acquisition of power and honor is "the greatest good" in terms of the natural desire of the natural man, that is, in terms of desire that has not yet been humbled by the discipline of bad experiences (cf. *De homine* 11.15 with *Elements* 1.9.21 and *Leviathan* 11, as well as with *De cive* 1.2 n.1 and 1.4). Now, admittedly the striving for ever greater power can *also* be really good, that is, rational; but this rational striving for power can be understood as rational only if the postulate of "natural reason," that is, the "norm of universal ethics," is made clear: the rational striving for power is the "permitted" striving for power, that is, the striving for power in accord with natural right (*Leviathan* 11). A more precise analysis would also show that in Hobbes's view the natural desire of *man* is at bottom a striving for ever greater glory; that is, according to Hobbes's conception of glory, it is vanity. Mr. Lubieński's view that, according to Hobbes, the unrestrained striving for glory "comes to sight only in *some men*" (61) is based on a misunderstanding of the passage cited as evidence by him in *Leviathan* 13; and besides, it is completely contradicted by the paragraph immediately following the passage in *Leviathan* 13 that was referred to, not to mention numerous other texts. Third, it can be objected against Mr. Lubieński's conception of "the first foundation of the ethical system" of Hobbes that if the *opposition* between the goal of natural desire and the goal of natural reason is equated to the *difference* between "life advancement" and "preservation of life," Hobbes's politics completely loses its proper tension; for once one has replaced natural desire, which (as a

comparison of the passage in the epistle dedicatory of *De cive* referred to on p. 88 with *De cive* 1.12 shows) is identical with the "natural inclination of men to harm each other," with "life advancement," it becomes unintelligible why, according to Hobbes, man is by nature wolf to man or, as Mr. Lubieński says, an "asocial" being (124)—and this is still more the case with Mr. Lubieński's view that the "tendency to life advancement encompasses all human activity and hence all moral actions" (62).

IV

Finally, we consider the analysis of Hobbes's teaching on obligation (69–117), which Mr. Lubieński himself regards as the core of his work (14). Mr. Lubieński distinguishes, as in fact have most scholars before him, between a "logical" and a "psychological" foundation [*Begründung*] of obligation in Hobbes's doctrine. The "logical" foundation demonstrates the preservation of life to be "an absolute and irrefutable demand of reason": man, who strives by nature for the "advancement of life," must for that very reason strive first for the "preservation of life" (cf. 56 and 69). This foundation, however, is inadequate; for it leaves unexplained "why the preservation of life is the obligation of each" (109). This more radical inquiry is a matter for the "psychological" foundation. According to the latter, obligation is an obstacle or, more precisely, an obstacle that is not actually perceived but anticipated and that is, precisely for that reason, an intellectual and *therefore* moral obstacle (71–76 and 82; cf. especially 76: "Anticipation already represents a factor of moral nature"). More strictly and properly speaking, obligation is "a moral [sc. = intellectual] obstacle that constrains all men alike as regards their natural goals" (73). And this clearly means: obligation is a psychic compulsion (84 and 118) or a psychic restraint (82). It is precisely this compulsory character that remains unaccounted for in the "logical" foundation. Hobbes indeed attempts to bring together the two foundations in claiming that what man should desire rationally—namely, obtaining the means for the preservation of his life—is also what he in fact desires of necessity. But since man clearly desires all kinds of things contradicted by reason's prescriptions, Hobbes must postulate, besides the conscious and often unreasonable will, an "unconscious," "presumed," and genuine will of man that is always directed to what is rational (87 and 148ff.).

Mr. Lubieński's remarks on the "presumed" no doubt come very close to Hobbes's view. Mr. Lubieński also recognizes the origin of this view "should be sought in the Platonic proposition that there is no unjust man who does injustice voluntarily" (149n where, in particular, there is a reference to *Crito*

51e). It is, however, doubtful if Mr. Lubieński does justice to Hobbes's view. He believes that one should object to Hobbes that "in reality there are no 'unconscious contracts' and no unconscious will or unconscious desire" (229). We, on the other hand, would argue, in Hobbes's favor, that if Mr. Lubieński were right, the attempt "to bring this hidden will to consciousness" (156), or to enlighten man about himself, would be meaningless because it would be superfluous. The notion of a "presumed will," it seems to us, can be understood only within the horizon of the idea of the Enlightenment; separated from its original horizon, it becomes incomprehensible and thus easy to criticize and reject.

Since Mr. Lubieński does not understand the notion of a "presumed will" on the basis of its origin, he must in the end judge it to be a product of a confusion. Hobbes, he believes, resorted to this notion because he wanted to make the self-contradictory attempt to "reconcile the normative character of natural law with a positivist worldview, the notion of ought with a causal, deterministic conception of nature" (196), or generally, because he wanted to treat "modern principles, based on experience and psychological observation, with the help of antiquated rationalist arguments and deductions" (233). The notion of a "presumed will" is thus necessary only because Hobbes wishes to reconcile the "logical" and the "psychological" foundation of obligation.

We do not deny that there are enough texts that justify the distinction between a "logical" and a "psychological" foundation. But, as has been already noted by Tönnies in a similar context, Hobbes is making an effort not merely to reconcile the two foundations somewhat but to make them coincide. This means: Hobbes's actual thought certainly cannot be understood on the basis of the distinction between a "logical" and a "psychological" foundation; it can be understood only if one goes behind this distinction.

Mr. Lubieński presents the "logical" foundation as if Hobbes had said nothing more than this: every *bonum* [good], as a *bonum* for man, presupposes that man *is alive*; hence the preservation of life is *bonorum primum* [the first of the goods]. But Hobbes himself left no doubt that one cannot rest with this all too "logical" determination. The obscurity of the supposedly so clear determination that the preservation of life is "an absolute and irrefutable demand of reason" comes out more clearly if one reverses the question: is death the greatest evil? Hobbes does not respond affirmatively to this question without a decisive qualification, for he knows that *under certain circumstances* death should be counted among the goods. The preservation of life thus cannot quite be the norm of a *universally* valid ethics. Hobbes helps himself in saying that in any case agonizing, violent death is the greatest evil (*De homine* 11.6 and *De cive*, epistle dedicatory). Not the preservation of

life but the preservation of life against an attack by other men is, according to Hobbes, the goal served by morality. That is precisely why for him the teaching of natural law, whose content consists in the conditions for peaceful living together, simply coincides with morality (*Leviathan* 14); and that is precisely why he denies that the virtues recognized by Plato and Aristotle besides justice (e.g., courage, generosity, etc.), which are not conditions for peaceful living together, are virtues (*De homine* 13.9; on the basis of this passage, and if one keeps before one's eyes the whole context of Hobbes's politics, it will appear that the recognition of virtues besides justice, e.g., in *De cive* 3.32, is the consequence of an entanglement in the tradition that has not yet been overcome). Thus: the content of obligation consists not in the means for the preservation of life generally, but in the means for the preservation of life against the attack of other men, that is, in the conditions of peace and only in the conditions of peace.

But why does man have an obligation to seek peace? This question should be answered by the "psychological" foundation of obligation. With regard to this, Mr. Lubieński has confronted in particular the view according to which Hobbes understood an action out of obligation as an action out of fear [*Furcht*]. In opposition to this view, he claims that according to Hobbes, "the motives of obligation and fear [*Angst*] are completely different from each other" (93). He is right to argue that Hobbes, no less than any other moralist, knew how to distinguish between right action out of obligation, that is, *propter praeceptum legis* [because of the precept of the law], and right action out of fear of punishment (113ff.). In order to remove all support from the opposing view, he distinguishes between two meanings of "fear" in Hobbes's writings, an "intellectual" one and an "affective" one: Hobbes identifies consciousness of obligation only with fear "intellectually" understood; but fear so understood or "care" (*Sorge*) is nothing but the "voice of reason" (94–98). Yet it is only here that the actual problem begins, which, however, Mr. Lubieński does not even pose to himself: Why in fact does "the word fear (*metus*) mean in Hobbes, in its broadest sense, simply the voice of reason" (97)? Why in fact does Hobbes call reason as consciousness of obligation "fear"? Obviously, because the rational consciousness of obligation constitutes itself in foreseeing something frightening, or rather the most frightening thing there is, namely, violent death. Let us leave it open whether the phenomenon of consciousness of obligation can be understood adequately in this way; in any case, this way happens to be sufficient for Mr. Lubieński's legitimate concern to distinguish, in Hobbes's sense, between action out of obligation and action out of fear of punishment: "obligation" and "fear" remain as different as fear that is far-sighted, consistent, and

determines one's life completely from top to bottom and fear that is short-sighted, momentary, and without a horizon. Mr. Lubieński himself recognizes the fundamental connection between fear of violent death and consciousness of obligation when he says: "life-threatening danger forms a proper foundation for the establishment of a universally valid system of obligation" (124). Thus it is life-threatening danger—and certainly not merely "the principle of reason concerning the necessity of self-preservation," as Mr. Lubieński, improving on an Italian author, claims in another passage (113)—that is the source of obligation. Fear of violent death—here is [*voilà*] that obstacle or that compulsion which is sought by the "psychological" foundation of obligation. But this fact, which is supposedly sought only by the "psychological" foundation, is none other than the fact with which the "logical" foundation is concerned, and in the same sense: recognition of violent death as the greatest evil is necessarily fear of that death; that is precisely why this knowledge is "compulsory."

According to Hobbes, there is only *one* ground of obligation: fear of violent death as the fear that defines man completely from top to bottom. This is not to say that fear is the *exhaustive* ground of obligation. The most important intermediary between fear of violent death and consciousness of obligation is mutual trust. (This is how one should understand the passages, to which Mr. Lubieński refers on pp. 103–5, in *De cive* 8.3–4 and 9.9 or in *Leviathan* 20 that are apparently inconsistent with our interpretation.) This is not the place to elaborate the genesis of consciousness of obligation on the basis of fear of violent death in Hobbes's sense. Let us say only this much: one can illuminate the path that leads from fear of violent death to consciousness of obligation, a path sufficiently indicated, even if not sufficiently illuminated, by Hobbes, only if one adheres strictly to Hobbes's pathmarks, that is, to the overall plan of his political science. This plan is completely neglected by Mr. Lubieński. He indeed mentions the fact that Hobbes distinguishes between natural right and natural law (84–86 and 157–59). But as is betrayed by his admitted inability to translate these expressions properly (16f.), he has not understood the fundamental significance of this distinction. Only because of this can he say that according to Hobbes, "at bottom our very first obligation is the preservation of life" (71). For Hobbes leaves no doubt that the preservation of life is the content of natural *right* and that man is thus absolutely justified in the preservation of his life, but not obligated to it. Precisely for this reason, Mr. Lubieński has not understood Hobbes's whole *procedure*. For Hobbes proceeds in such a way that he *first* grounds natural right, that is, the unqualifiedly justified claim by man, and *only afterward* grounds natural law, that is, man's obligations. Thus one certainly

cannot understand Hobbes's teaching on obligation if one does not clearly separate the foundation of natural right from the foundation of natural law, even more clearly, if necessary, than Hobbes himself does, and first and foremost understand the foundation of natural right in itself. But if one has understood the foundation of natural right, one has already taken the decisive step toward understanding the teaching on obligation. For the decisive step for this purpose is elucidating how Hobbes introduces the distinction between just and unjust; but he introduces this distinction first not in the teaching on obligation but already in his teaching on natural right.* Now, if one does not recognize that natural right, and not only natural law, already has a moral character, one would easily glide over the very concise and—as the divergences in presentation in the three different versions of Hobbes's politics already show—very difficult founding [*Begründung*] of natural right. But one cannot recognize the fundamental significance of the founding of natural right if one takes it for granted, as does Mr. Lubieński, that “natural desire” is a striving for “life advancement,” which “also encompasses all moral actions”; for then one already begins from a moral and thus natural-right principle and hence one can no longer see a problem in the *founding* of natural right. The incorrect definition of natural desire as a striving for “life advancement” thus suffices to make understanding Hobbes's politics impossible in principle.

To sum up, our objection against Mr. Lubieński is twofold: (1) According to Hobbes, the natural desire is not a striving for “life advancement” but, as a more precise analysis shows, the striving of man to please himself through being recognized by other men as their superior, therefore vanity. (2) There are not two foundations [*Begründungen*] of obligation in Hobbes, which are subsequently reconciled, but only *one* foundation, which can be characterized neither as “logical” nor as “psychological”: Hobbes sees *the* ground of obligation in fear of violent death. Vanity and fear are the two poles, according to Hobbes's teaching, between which man moves in becoming a citizen of the state from being a man in the state of nature. “By nature,” that is, before any education, man is vain, filled with a limitless longing for ever greater triumphs. This limitless longing is opposed by fear of violent death, which places a limit on it: fear of violent death restricts the “naturally” maximal demand by man, which is directed toward unrestrained mastery, to the rationally minimal demand, which wants nothing more than the defense

* Strauss has crossed out: “In other words, that obstacle which according to Mr. Lubieński is obligation, the obstacle which constrains men in their natural goals, which, according to Mr. Lubieński is obligation (75)” —EDS.

of bare life. It is precisely this restriction that makes man fundamentally capable of entering into obligations: the minimum demand, to which the "natural" demand is restricted by violent death, is the source of obligation.

Vanity is prior to fear: "by nature," before any education, man is dominated by vanity. But man can be dominated by vanity only as long as he falsely estimates his own powers and that of other men, as long as he does not know his real situation. He experiences his real situation as soon as he faces the danger of violent death. Before he has experienced this danger, he thus lives in a world of his imagination, as it were in a dream: he awakens, he comes to himself "*damnorum experientia*" [through the experience of evils], through bad experiences, through the experience of the frightening character of the real world. Fear of violent death is thus so little a vague terror that it is rather *the* force that truly *enlightens* man. The Enlightenment character of Hobbes's philosophy is revealed in the opposition between vanity and fear.

Vanity and fear characterize the two opposite ways of human life. To vanity—the outlook of the physically grown-up man who is still only a *puer robustus* [strong boy]—there corresponds the natural ideal of the happiness of man: the dream of triumph, of conquest, of mastery over all men and thereby over all things. Fear—the concern of *homo adultus* [adult man]—is in accord with the outlook of defense, of a modest life, of working in the rank and file. It is to the opposition so understood, which is never again developed as purely, as deeply, and as frankly as it is by Hobbes, that one must go back if one wishes to understand the ideal of liberalism, as well as socialism, in its foundations. For each battle against the political in the name of the economic presupposes a preceding depreciation of the political. But this depreciation is carried out in such a way that the political, as the domain of vanity, prestige, the desire for importance, is opposed, either in a veiled or in an open manner, to the economic as the world of rational, "matter-of-fact," modest work.

Thus a specifically modern outlook is expressed in the opposition between vanity and fear (or modesty). At first sight this opposition presents itself as a secularized form of the opposition between *superbia* [pride] and *humilitas* [humility]. In any case, it has the Christian conception of life as its precondition. It is in accordance with this opposition that an age that has *lost* faith, but that precisely for that reason has faith as its precondition, understands itself. Yet the outlook in question, which in fact is expressed not only in Hobbes's writings, cannot be understood solely on the basis of its negative presupposition. The path from vanity to fear is the path from thoughtlessness to sobriety, from the glittering illusion of "political life"

to the true good, which is accessible only to rational insight. This means: the opposition vanity-fear is the modern transformation, conditioned by Christianity, of the opposition classically expressed by Socrates-Plato. Hence a radical understanding of Hobbes's politics and a grounded judgment of it are ultimately possible only in confronting directly Plato's politics: only in this way can one see whether the modification of ancient thought that Hobbes undertakes and that is essentially conditioned by Christianity really rests, as Hobbes claims, on a deeper knowledge of human nature, or what the actual significance is of the interest in "depth."

FOREWORD TO A
PLANNED BOOK ON HOBBS
(1931)



The question concerning the right order of living together—concerning its “natural” order, concerning *natural right*—urges itself, in view of the reigning anarchy, on every impartial person. After the discouraging experiences with the aspirations to natural right, the courage to provide an answer is admittedly slight. These experiences have for a considerable time led many to reject the idea of natural right completely. Indeed, it seems as if the experience has taught that there is no less anarchy in the science of natural right than in living together itself. Since traditional natural right was shaken, above all, by Hobbes’s assault, the opposing natural right doctrines have by turns quickly followed suit; natural right appears to be just as arbitrary as any individual conviction, which, if defended with the required force and based on already existing, “real” tendencies, may indeed lead to the formation of a party but never to the foundation and establishment of the *state*. This is in fact the conclusion at which a more recent critic of natural right arrives: “If even the individual naïvely experiences his temporary interests as a ‘right,’ how much more will every interest group want to invoke ‘justice’ in the realization of its demands!” (Kelsen, *Die philosophischen Grundlagen der Naturrechtslehre und des Rechtspositivismus*, Charlottenburg, 1928, 77 [446]).* If

* We have used, while in some cases slightly modifying, the already existing English translation of this work by Wolfgang Kraus, entitled “Natural Law Doctrine and Legal Positivism,” which is available in the form of an appendix to Hans Kelsen’s *General Theory of Law and State*,

natural right is, or more exactly, if natural rights are only “ideologies” with the help of which various “interest groups” raise their particular aspirations to the level of universal demands, then natural right truly belongs where its contemporary critic wants to put it, in the dustbin of history; henceforth, then, only that legal theory is possible “which seriously rejects the assumption of a natural right and is called legal positivism” (63 [435]).

Now, however it must be related to natural right, legal positivism cannot be the last word on the subject. Its “characteristic aim,” according to Kelsen, is “the purity of its [i.e., right’s] knowledge in the sense of *political indifference*. . . . This merely means that it accepts *the given legal order without evaluating it as such*” (67 [438]). Is such a position even *possible*? It is perhaps even *necessary* as the duty of the jurist. For “the noblest virtue of the pure jurist is proven with respect precisely to the right that is dissatisfactory on account of its harmfulness or inhumanity: the ability to keep his understanding free from being influenced even by the deepest personal convictions and the warmest desires of the heart, expecting satisfaction only from the application of right” (Bergbohm, *Jurisprudenz und Philosophie*, vol. 1, Leipzig, 1892, 398). This professional duty of the jurist finds not only its legal but its human justification in the fact that legal security, at any rate, is a great good, that perhaps the most defective order is always better than no order at all. Thus, the “value-free” stance can well be justified—as a duty of the jurist; but it *requires* justification even if it is only expected of the jurist; all the more so if it is claimed quite simply to be expected of all men. As such, however, it is not at all possible.

Legal positivism claims that there is no right prior to positive right; this does not indeed prevent the different political parties from already speaking of *the* just in the formation of right; this speech, however, conceals that it involves *only* interest; every natural right is in truth nothing other than the ideology of an interest group; from the struggle of the different interest-groups prior to right, that right emerges which alone deserves to be called right, positive right.—This conception presupposes that there is a necessity to pass off particular interests as just claims. This necessity apparently exists because unconcealed interests are not at all defensible; for what is publicly defensible is only what serves the public interest, that is to say, what is recognized generally or by the majority as serving the public interest. “Ideology” is therefore possible only if, *prior* to all positive right, there is a difference

between what is publicly defensible and what is not publicly defensible. There is therefore an authority (for the jurist as such a possibly trivial one) *prior* to all positive right, which is usually portrayed as "the people's sense of right," as "public opinion" and the like. Now, if there were an "interest group" that in observing its interests observed at the same time the interests of the collective, the claim of this group to defend, not merely interests, but also just demands would not be ideology but right. That there is *no* such identity of particular and general interests is the presupposition of the legal positivist claim, which implies that *all* political parties would defend their particular interests as demands of natural right: indeed for Kelsen the general interest is nothing other than a "fiction."¹ Hence, all parties have the same right: each defends its interests. Only thus is "political indifference" at all possible. But what, then, according to the legal positivist presupposition, is the status of the equality of all parties in reality? Even if all parties always depend on ideologies, all parties do not of course depend on ideologies in the *same* way. Let us make this fact as drastically clear to ourselves as possible. If the haves said, "Such and such demands must be fulfilled, otherwise we cannot maintain our standard of living," the great majority of the have-nots or have-littles would, in the face of this justification, go back to business as usual; and not only the majority but every reasonable man would do that. The haves must therefore pretend to defend their demands in the interest of all; fundamentally they require an ideology. It is completely different with the have-nots: they can defend their interests in an unconcealed manner for they have "nothing to lose"; they fight for the minimum level of subsistence. There is therefore one interest group that is fundamentally in a position of serving its interests as such in an unconcealed manner. Whether it in fact—perhaps for tactical reasons—does or does not make use of ideologies is fundamentally a matter of indifference: for it does not fundamentally rely on ideologies. The claim that all political parties serve only the interest of particular interest groups leads, therefore, to the advocacy of a particular, outstanding interest group, namely, of that interest group whose victory would be decided at the moment in which the particular interests as such would be served openly, without ideology. It is no accident that the suspicion of ideals as "ideologies" was raised, in a historically decisive manner, by that most influential advocate of the interests of the proletariat, by Marx. That legal positivism for which every natural right is only the ideology of an interest

1. *Wer soll der Hüter der Verfassung sein?* [Who Should be the Guardian of the Constitution?] (Berlin, 1931), 30.

group thus reveals itself as the *ideology of a crypto-Marxist position*.² Hence, it implicates all *natural right* presuppositions that are “sublated” in Marxism. Under the legal positivism of Kelsen—and the same applies mutatis mutandis to every legal positivism—lies a concealed natural right; legal positivism is not possible in truth, but only in the imagination of its representatives; it itself is what it claims natural right to be: an ideology. But how does this ideology become possible? Which reality conceals itself by means of this ideology?

Kelsen himself responds to this question in the following way: “An anti-metaphysical, scientific-critical philosophy with objectivity as its ideal will, just like legal positivism, thrive *only in relatively peaceful times*, in periods of social balance” (77).^{*} The condition of legal positivism is *peace*. This statement must be taken *cum grano salis* [with a grain of salt]: as he himself emphasizes, Kelsen at the end practices his legal positivism in the most unpeaceful present. What finally matters, then, is not the peacefulness or unpeacefulness of the age but the *peacefulness of mind* or the *unpeacefulness of mind* of the researcher.^{*}

The condition of legal positivism is peace. Completely apart from the fact that peace is ambiguous—there is the calm of the cemetery and the calm before the storm—it is not granted to man to live simply peacefully. Kelsen himself speaks of “*relatively peaceful times*.” In such times, absolute unrest, which swells beneath the surface of the relative calm, is not or is hardly noticed. Right wishes to be the order for peace; it is supposed to subdue the unrest dangerous to peace. But can that which is not known, not known in its entire dangerousness, be subdued? The entire dangerousness of human unrest is most easily misjudged in peaceful times. That is to say: peaceful times are least suitable for making possible that knowledge of man on which lasting right alone can be based, however suitable they may be for laying out,

2. Kelsen's Marxism becomes apparent in his polemic against Carl Schmitt's idea of the “total state”; he explains: “Only the socialist state can be a total state in the sense of a coercive order fully absorbing the society. . . . With the turn to the total state, the opposition between state and society should have lost its meaning. But from the standpoint of the proletariat and of a proletarian social theory, this opposition today has completely the same significance as it ever had from the standpoint of the bourgeoisie and of the bourgeois teaching on state and society, and is therefore today just as relevant and right as ever.” *Wer soll der Hüter der Verfassung sein?* 34.

^{*} This is a slight modification of Kraus's translation, for which see Wedberg, 445.—TRANS.

^{*} We have chosen to translate the German words *Ruhe*, *Unruhe*, and the various derivatives of these words used by Strauss in this context by different English words (i.e., peace, calm, rest, and their opposites).—TRANS.

for ordering, and so on, with greater "purity," the right originally conceived with a view to the unrest dangerous to peace.

Only in view of *unrest* [*Unruhe*], only *in* unrest, if not indeed in revolts [*Unruhen*] can that understanding of man be gained from which the right created for the satisfaction of man can be understood: only in this way can it be radically understood that as well as how man needs right; only in this way is *philosophic* understanding of right possible. We thereby approach the view of *Hobbes*, who, "in relatively *unpeaceful* times," in times of civil war, *pacis studio* [by zeal for peace] (*De cive*, praef. ad. Lect),* and not for the sake of the pure knowledge of an already present right, carried out a philosophic founding of right. By making clear to himself the entire dangerousness and endangeredness of man to man and mankind in the world, he defines natural right as the behavior appropriate to this situation of man. Even were this attempt—and every attempt of this kind—to fail, one would not be able to contest that it is already as such truer, because more appropriate, to the *unpeaceful* situation of man than the enterprise of legal positivism, which admittedly "can thrive only in relatively peaceful times."

But are we not unjust in wanting to know, from *one* self-incriminating statement of *one* legal positivist, which can be interpreted without difficulty in an entirely harmless sense—after all, every scientific activity indeed presupposes a "relative peace" on the part of the one researching—the hidden presupposition of legal positivism *as such*? We will therefore not avoid an extensive treatment of the presuppositions of legal positivism. We take as the basis of this treatment the work that is recognized as containing the most elaborate and most complete critique of natural right: Carl Bergbohm's "Jurisprudenz und Rechtsphilosophie" (Jurisprudence and Legal Philosophy) (volume 1, Leipzig, 1892).

Because of Kelsen's claim that legal positivism can thrive only in peaceful times, we thought that we were permitted to conclude that legal positivism is humanly impossible: man as the being who harbors in himself an absolute unrest is precisely for that reason directed toward natural right. To speak with Bergbohm: "all men are born natural right jurists" (122). With what right, however, can Bergbohm then be an opponent of natural right? With the same right that one who says "all men are born slaves of their passions" can be an opponent of the passions. The interest in natural right is a passionate, unreasonable inclination, one worth fighting. To accept "the given legal order, without evaluating it as such" (Kelsen, 67 [438])—"this presupposes,

* The translation attributed to Hobbes reads: "for the . . . establishment of peace." See *On the Citizen*, "Preface to the Reader" in the Hackett edition, p. 105.

besides good resolve and the strict discipline of thought, still so much capacity for the painful denial of the noblest human stirrings as is only acquired extremely seldom" (Bergbohm, 122). An *asceticism* is therefore required in order to cope with the inclination toward natural right; and not, indeed, a taming of dark animal drives but the "painful denial of the noblest human stirrings." We also find here the pathos of *probité*, which we find generally at the basis of positivism: the disgust with the "noble delusion," with the "sublime," with the "magical power of *higher* values." Against all this seduction that comes out of natural right, "*the duty to truthfulness*" is invoked (cf. in particular 171 and 210). Thus natural right appears once again at the basis of legal positivism—this time in the form of a nonpositive, natural obligation.

Against this the legal positivist objects: what an unbearable perversion of concepts! The duty to truthfulness is an ethical not a legal duty. We retort: but still an unconditional duty; but if there are unconditional duties in general, then there will indeed also be such unconditional duties as have a relation to human living together. Granted, there could be duties in general that would do without this relation entirely; but if there are nonpositive duties for men living together with others, there is thus natural right. But—the legal positivist further objects—why is "right" spoken of here? Obviously, in order to attribute falsely the character of right, that is, legal relevance, to a norm that does not and cannot have this character. To characterize ethical obligations, even if they are not merely individually ethical, as natural right and thereby still as right is a misuse of language.³

Language is a powerful ally of natural right. Not only jurists speak of "right." And the jurists themselves, when they speak of "right," do not always mean positive right. As in when Bergbohm says: "To first drive out false knowledge in order, then, to substitute for it *right* knowledge" (104). Or when he knows "nothing *right* that begins" with natural right terminology. Such things easily bring up the supposition that the talk of "right" even *prior* to all positive right has a meaning that is not contemptible; that positive right is a scion of the right originally meant by language; that positive right, torn away from its nonpositive life roots, is incomprehensible and unlivable. Bergbohm is himself conscious of the danger with which language threatens legal positivism. Nonpositive right "has the same name among people [sc. as positive right], and therefore they conclude, unconsciously and against all caution, under the well-known influence of language on thought, that

3. As long as positive right "is wholly affirmed, reason by itself does it also [sc. act as a critical standard of positive right] and no *right* of reason is required, moral blamelessness suffices and the approval by an ethical *right* is not requisite [*erforderlich*]" (Bergbohm, 401).

it is also the same thing" (51). Only the "singularity of meaning of truly technical expressions" protects against the multiplicity of meaning of the language of "people" (61). And when understood as a technical expression, "right" means, as Bergbohm does not tire of assuring us, only positive right. But the suspicion that the ambiguousness of the word "right" has objective grounds, that "right" in "natural right" and "positive right" is identical, will not be silenced. Here Bergbohm sees no other way out but the explanation: "there is simply a healthy striving [sc. of the spirit of language] to create new expressions for needless representations" (45n). In other words: language itself means by "right" only positive right. Hence, "nothing is left" for the representatives of natural right but to let these ephemeral products of their subjectivity [sc. natural right] slip right in under the linguistic guise of the objectively established representation of right—this was not indeed unprofitable for them!" (ibid.). One will not, by any stretch of the imagination, be able to judge of the scientific value of this explanation any more than of the explanation of religion based on priestly fraud. The struggle of the legal positivist against natural right and therewith against language is taken completely ad absurdum in the remark: "we designate objectionable right as *mistaken* right, whereas the correct philosopher of natural right is recognizable in that *he characterizes it as not-right* precisely because of his rational knowledge of the true right; indeed many who without further ado pronounce their subjective convictions holy disregard language so fundamentally that in such a case they simply speak of *nonright*" (145). Language therefore "seduces" the sworn legal positivist into distinguishing, within positive right, between mistaken right and nonmistaken right. What, however, is the part of positive right that is not "mis-right," other than a part that is in accordance with the just right, with natural right? Still, "mis-right" means in any case a right that is not perfect right; according to its formal obligation it is indeed perfect right; but its deficient material goodness forces one to characterize it as mis-right. That therefore means: material goodness belongs essentially to perfect right; when there is positive mis-right, there is therefore a non-positive, natural norm that allows for judging (and therewith, among other things, also condemning) of positive right.

Bergbohm's critique of natural right is a critique from the standpoint of the jurist, not from the standpoint of man; for "all men are born natural right jurists" (122). Nevertheless, this critique does not have a merely juridical meaning: it has to do with keeping "the authority of positive right in every respect undiminished" (396). For this critique, the problem of natural right positions itself in such a way that the desideratum of natural right must identify itself before the tribunal of positive right: "Ideal right finds . . .

the place occupied by positive right, which in fact governs the outer living conditions and activities of men, as far as this is possible by means of abstract norms. It must, in some way, take a stand on positive right" (371). But on what is this priority of positive right based? Why is it then an unconditional requirement that "the authority of positive right remain in every respect undiminished"? That positive right has a basis is generally admitted as a matter of course: it finds "sufficient support in pure factualness, physical and psychic," but not yet in a *right* (400). Factualness, however, is only externally compelling, not inwardly binding. If there is nothing that *obligates* man to acknowledge positive right, then not only can the authority of positive right not remain in every respect undiminished, but instead positive right has no greater authority than any *factum brutum*. Positive right is up in the air if it has no basis in natural right. Against this, Bergbohm can only remind us: "If *every* right does not find sufficient support in pure factualnesses, physical and psychic, one must *perhaps* even search further for that right on which natural right, for its part, rests, etc." (400). In order to justify the authority of positive right, one would not only perhaps but necessarily have to search for it, if natural right, based on the *final* goal without which man would cease to be man, would not justify the authority of positive right. And granted, if such a goal would not allow itself to be ascertained, the authority of positive right would be gone.

However much legal positivism may be able to "thrive only in relatively peaceful times" and is therefore bound to the fact that man abandons his radical questioning; however much man, as "a born natural right jurist," can cease to believe in natural right or be in quest for natural right only inasmuch as he ceases being man; however much natural right is eradicable only inasmuch as language is eradicated; however much the authority of positive right is fully undermined if natural right is not retained: the legal positivists still cannot have wanted such manifest nonsense; there must be, or must have been, an understandable temptation to legal positivism. The positivist denial of natural right is only to be understood as a sector in the battle against all "metaphysics" that dominates the entire breadth of the nineteenth century. Once the priority of positive science over philosophy is presupposed—and this presupposition could not appear questionable to the century that believed positive science was to be described as "the hard-ship of research work" and philosophy, by contrast, as the "slight exertions of the imagination" (Bergbohm, 200)—what emerges for legal philosophy is that it must consult principally the representatives of the positive science of right, "*exact* jurisprudence" (133). The positive science of right is now convinced that the practice of right gets by fully with positive right; there

is no need for a natural right jurist as such; there are no gaps in positive right that would require filling in by natural right (371–93). Hence, legal philosophy confines itself to a “founding” or a “justification” of the positive *science* of right; it is in danger of becoming nothing other than a methodology of jurisprudence. Legal philosophy is denatured into a methodology of the science of right, just as much as natural philosophy is denatured into a methodology of natural science. In general, one may say about the philosophy of this age that it always relates to the subject matter only through the medium of the positive sciences of the subject matter. This denaturing of philosophy presupposes the belief in the functioning of the positive sciences; this belief is an element, perhaps even the carrier, of the belief in “culture,” which is divided into the “provinces of culture” (Natorp)* of science, morality and right, art and religion. The more thoughtful philosophers of culture did indeed remain conscious of the fact that they had the task of clarifying the norms by which empirical culture could be measured; but that the task of man is to be defined, fundamentally, as “culture,” that science, morality, right and art, as well as religion (so at least many have taught), essentially belong to culture—this the age did not dare to question. Legal positivism thus rests [*beruht*] finally on the belief in the foundations on which the last century worked and—rested [*geruht*]; it presupposes that a well-nigh inconceivable general *peacefulness* has come about. After the belief of the last century started to waver, doubt was stirred in “culture” as well as in right and the science of right; now neither the authority of positive right nor the competence of the positive science of right stands indisputably firm in matters of natural right. The question of natural right urges itself forward in its natural sharpness.

Considerations of the preceding kind have very limited value. They suffice as a reminder that, and why, natural right even today, and precisely again today, is a desideratum. They do not prove that this desideratum is fulfilled, or even that it is fulfillable; they give proof against legal positivism, but not for natural right. The opponents of natural right claim to be able to show, with compelling reasons, that natural right is itself impossible. We must therefore reexamine whether the alleged reasons of the opponents of natural right are valid.

The question concerning natural right means the right order of human living together; the right order is that order which is determined by reason. Against this the objection is raised: reason can determine the right order

* Paul Natorp (1854–1924) was a neo-Kantian and a Platonist from the Marburg School.—TRANS.

only formally; natural right necessarily remains *empty*, meaning nothing. This objection is already refuted by daily experience. In the dispute about marriage legislation, both parties appeal explicitly or inexplicitly to natural right: to the authority, based on natural right, of the institution of marriage, or to the natural right of the individuals united in marriage, to dispose freely of their living together and thereby of its dissolution. The natural right of the obligations as well as the natural right of claims (of "human rights") is eminently concrete. Underlying both of the only two historically effective natural rights is an ideal of life that cannot be codified juridically in an unambiguous manner but that does provide the lawgiver with unambiguous directives for deciding all *fundamental* questions. Admittedly a court cannot decide according to natural right "whether a marriage is invalid on account of a neglect of form in the ceremony" ([Friedrich Karl von] Savigny, *Vom Beruf unsrer Zeit für Gesetzgebung und Rechtswissenschaft*, 2nd ed., Heidelberg, 1828, 76);* but natural right does give directives as to whether the once-contracted marriage may be dissolved according to the discretion of both husband and wife or not. Only the "principle of equality understood to be the essence of justice" can be defined according to natural right, but not "what or who is equal" (Kelsen 69 [439]).* But it is in no way shown thereby that the principle of equality represents an empty abstraction. The principle of equality maintained all the way "from Plato and Aristotle to Fries and Nelson" certainly has a fundamentally different meaning in Plato and Aristotle, on the one hand, and in Fries and Nelson, on the other:* the ancients did not deny but allowed that there were slaves and masters by nature; the moderns implied the simple equality of all men; and what difference could be more concrete than this one! The claim that natural right cannot get beyond "contentless abstractions" (M. E. Mayer, *Rechtsphilosophie*, 2nd ed., Berlin, 1926, 10) is refuted by the entire history of natural right. The infamous "anarchy of systems" within the discipline of natural right could never have come to be if very concrete notions of the right order of human living together had not opposed each other as enemies.

* We have made use of, while modifying slightly, the already-existing English translation of this work, available as *The Vocation of Our Age for Legislation and Jurisprudence*, trans. Abraham Hayward (Union, NJ: Lawbook Exchange, 2002), 93.—TRANS.

* We have modified the translation slightly here.—TRANS.

* Jakob Friedrich Fries (1773–1843) was professor of philosophy and mathematics at the University of Heidelberg; Leonard Nelson (1882–1927), a professor at the University of Göttingen, revived interest in Fries.—TRANS.

But—one will further object—were not the concrete contents of the different natural rights falsely attributed to them? In order to be able to support this objection, one would *either* have to have shown through an exact, critical analysis of all or at the very least the most important natural right theories that they rest on false attributions; and that has never been shown. Or one would have to show, on the basis of a critique of reason, that reason is unable to determine more than the purely formal structure of right; what from the outset speaks against these possible demonstrations is the fact that the founder of the critique of reason adhered to natural right; we will not be content with the information that Kant “stayed . . . in the rut of the natural right doctrine” (Kelsen 76 [445]): in the end, Kant no less than his interpreters will have known what he could defend despite or because of his “formalism.”

The opinion that natural right cannot get beyond “contentless abstractions” has its basis neither in a fairly adequate induction from the history of natural right nor in a critique of reason generally. It arises rather from the following reflection, directed against natural right (cf. Bergbohm, 419ff., and Mayer, 10): If reason *as such* defines natural right, natural right is thus immutable, valid for all times; but now, historical experience shows that the elements of right that were acknowledged in all times are no more than “contentless abstractions.” Natural right cannot therefore get beyond “contentless abstractions.” This fallacy is understandable through the fact that very often in the history of natural right, its validity *for* all times (and peoples) was understood as an acknowledgment *by* all times (and peoples); that no mere misunderstanding is at fault here cannot and does not need to be shown; it suffices to point out that a preeminent teacher of natural right, Hobbes, explicitly rejected the viewpoint of factual acknowledgment in his polemic against the tradition of natural right (*De cive* 2.1), in order to show that the claim that natural right was fundamentally acknowledged always and everywhere is not necessarily linked to the claim of natural right.

The anarchy within the discipline of natural right seemed to prove that natural right is not necessarily empty: the most different natural right doctrines always opposed each other *in content*. Against the claim that this content was falsely attributed, not based on compelling considerations, we argued: this claim would have to be corroborated by a critical reexamination of at least the most important natural right doctrines. Against this will be said: Far from proving that natural right is not necessarily empty, the anarchy within the natural right discipline is rather enough and more than enough proof that where agreement of opinion, scientific conviction can be reached,

there can be only empty abstractions;⁴ and as regards the proof that there is something amiss with the justification of the different natural right doctrines, it is now supplied by all other theories of natural right against each individual natural right theory; each one has long since been refuted by all the others. "At the end of its work, instead of the *ratio* [reason] that had been claimed, rationalism saw an unmissable multiplicity of *rationes* [reasons]" (Alfred Manigk, *Die Idee des Naturrechts* [The Idea of Natural Right], Berlin and Leipzig, 1926, 4). "Propositions about right based on reason that diverge from one another contained collectively a contradiction to the claim of absoluteness made by the individual ones" (*ibid.*, 6). We would like in turn to suggest that were the anarchy within the doctrine of natural right really to have the character of a war of all against all (which in truth it does not have), from that alone nothing would follow against the necessity of the quest for natural right: all philosophic disciplines find themselves in the same situation; is there perhaps less conflict within ethics or the theory of scientific knowledge than within the natural right teaching? From the fact that agreement of opinion has not *so far* been obtained in the natural right teaching, nothing follows against the possibility of natural right. This fact is at most merely one *more* incentive for a serious quest for natural right. And moreover: the fact of anarchy is only claimed, it is not proven. That an impression of anarchy exists is admitted; but that this impression is not merely an initial, superficial impression must be proven. Certainly Hobbes opposes Grotius, Rousseau opposes Hobbes, etc. etc.: but are the reasons cogent? The reasons with which the various natural right teachers oppose each other must be *examined*. Prior to this examination, it cannot be simply said whether in the end one of the natural rights teachings feuded against by all the other philosophers is not the right teaching. And even if it were to emerge that none of these teachings is sustainable, perhaps the earlier ones failed because they proceeded from a wrong starting point; then the result for us would be that we would have to start anew, all the way at the beginning.

From the *factual* failure of the earlier [teachings], nothing follows against the impossibility* of their undertaking. The fact of anarchy in the natural right teaching becomes an argument against the possibility of natural right

4. "And so one should take to heart the striking fact that the same concept plays a main or supporting role in all major trends, surely of such different sorts themselves, of the philosophy of right in the first half of the nineteenth century—and thereby draw the conclusion about the emptiness of the concept of natural right" (Bergbohm, 176).

* The sense seems to call here for "possibility" rather than "impossibility"—TRANS.

as such in fact only because the reason for the *necessity* of failure and therefore for the anarchy is believed to be known. The opponents of natural right admit to us, as it were, that the natural right teachers failed "only" because they proceeded from a wrong starting point; but—they mean—the wrong starting point is precisely the *quest for the* natural right, the one eternal natural right. The natural right teachers had to fail because they sought *the one* natural right. For there is not the one eternal natural right, but rather every age (or rather every people and every class) has its ideal of right. Just as there is not the one eternal truth but merely a particular truth. Hence, it is reasonable to have a quest at most only for the *particular* ideal of right, valid for men in a *given* situation; in any case, no other ideal of right is to be found. Thus it is even possible to have a historical justification of natural right: the natural right teachers indeed sought *the* right, but they found, or rather formulated, the ideal of right of their age. They failed—measured by *their* standard; judged by the historical consciousness, they reached the goal, the only attainable goal. After the historical contingency of all human action and thought is seen clearly, however, it would be *dishonest* henceforth to postulate a human absolute.

OUTLINE: THE POLITICAL SCIENCE OF HOBBS

An Introduction to Natural Right (October 26–November 11, 1931)



PREFACE

- I. Desirability of natural right and skepticism toward it—legal positivism as product of a world at peace.
- II. All arguments against natural right rest on the historical consciousness.
- III. a. The limit of the relevance of the historical consciousness.
b. Discarding of the idea of natural right on the basis of the historical consciousness.
- IV. Hobbes—the first subject of the study.
- V. Correction of Dilthey's posing of the question. (To what extent is Dilthey interested in political science: G.S. II on renunciation of philosophy among liberals and conservatives in contrast to social democracy and center.)*

* Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911), professor of philosophy at the University of Berlin; the reference must be to his collected works, volume 2, "Weltanschauung und Analyse des Menschen seit Renaissance und Reformation" [Worldview and Analysis of Man since Renaissance and Reformation], ed. G. Misch (Leipzig: Teubner, 1915)—TRANS. This parenthetical statement was deleted by Strauss—EDS.

I. CHAPTER: SUBJECT AND METHOD OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

- §1. The concept of political science.
- §2. The tradition of political science.
- §3. The approach of political science.

II. CHAPTER: THE STATE AND CIVILIZATION

- §4. The nature of man.
- §5. The return to the state of nature.
- §6. Natural right.
 - a. The task predetermined through the presupposed goal: state, peace—compare Grotius the problematic 1.2, 1 (cf. §3).
 - b. Nature of man as absolute claim (*De cive*, ep. ded.).
 - c. The indefensibility of the absolute claim: all men *equal* to one another: vanity inappropriate. The *equal* claim: why not leave it at that?
 - d. Restriction of the absolute claim to the plainly defensible claim, to natural right: fear appropriate.
 - e. The discovery of a norm without starting from it: starting from the *freedom* of “desire” (*Elements*, ep. ded.), the natural striving for *happiness*, which [striving] is unlimited, does not know any goal; the limit is sought: this is *death*; the norm has the character of a *subsequent* delimiting, restriction of freedom; modesty [*Bescheidenheit*] as a result of moderating [one’s claim] [*Bescheidung*]; the *claim*, character remains in force.
 - f. The structure of Hobbes’s answer: (α) *formal* (compare Krüger);* (β) *political* (“defensible before *others*”) (good is what is unqualifiedly defensible).
 - g. Naturalisms: *De cive* 1.7; praef.: *cum jure possint, tum necessario velint* [if they can *by right*, then they desire *by necessity*]; Schmalenbach, 690 (possibly as a *note*).*
- §7. Natural obligation (*lex naturae* [law of nature]).
Fear-modesty-*sincerity* as condition of coming to an understanding.

* On Gerhard Krüger, see the note on p. xiii, as well as nn. 235, 249 above and pp. 159–63 below—TRANS.

* Herman Schmalenbach (1885–1950), who held Nietzsche’s chair at the University of Basel, wrote on Leibniz, Kant, and phenomenology. We were unable to locate this page reference—TRANS.

De cive 2.10 conclusion.

The contract: man engages in the contract not as a natural being but as *quasi nihil* [almost nothing]. *Source of obligation in a claim.*

§8. Natural public law: government and subjects.

- a. Unconditional obedience.
- b. The critique of vanity and the priority of monarchy (compare also *Leviathan* 42).
- c. The duties of government—but not enforceable.
- d. In the state the unqualifiedly defensible claim is maintained through: death penalty, the cowardice permitted in the face of the enemy. (Or → nation-state → world-state: law of nations; cf. St. Pierre on eternal peace.)*
- e. Freedom *in* the state: *why* it is freedom (cf. §9).
Freedom of conscience: Elements 2.6 and *De cive* 15.
Freedom of belief *Leviathan*.

§9. Civilization.

- a. The setting aside of everything prerational → rational construction of the patriarchal state: civilizational character of the *state* itself.
- b. Equality of all men: no natural right to rule; the equality of the sexes: denial of paternal power and replacement by maternal one.
Democracy: *Elements* 2.1–2, *De cive* 7.
- c. Emancipation of the striving for gain, purified from *gloria*, after the subjugation of nature: “*Utilitarianism*.” Relaxation of the unqualifiedly defensible claim into the modest, “matter-of-fact” claim; emancipation of passions as *limited*; limited unlimitedness: critique of *beatitudo*.

How through *inner* critique on the basis of Hobbes the whole modern essence originates.

- d. Critique of the traditional life ideal. (α) ἀνδρεία. Against revolution: *Elements* 2.7.13 and *De cive* [in *Elementa Philosophica. De Cive* (Basel: Joh. Jac. Flick, 1782)], pp. xv–xvi. Against *any* change of the form of government: *Leviathan* 42 (in the context of the polemic against Bellarmine); (β) θεωρία; (γ) religion: restriction of justice and love = good will = *lex naturalis* [natural law]; (δ) the παλαιὸν [ancient] (*Leviathan*, p. 490);* (ε) τιμή [honor].

* Charles-Irénée Castel, abbé de Saint-Pierre (1658–1753), was famous for being one of the first to propose an international court and league of states—TRANS.

* Tuck, “A Review and Conclusion”—TRANS.

The reform of the universities: the repeal of the oath and of the sacrament of marriage.

- e. The vision of a united, humanitarian *progressive* (s.c. [in the place cited above]) humanity—cf. §8d = progress, compare *querelle des anciens et des modernes* [quarrel of the ancients and the moderns]; see also Pascal, *Traité des humides* [= *Traité des liqueurs* (Récit de la grande expérience de l'équilibre des liqueurs)] = *Traité du vide* (Expériences nouvelles touchant le vide)], préface.

III. CHAPTER: THE POWER AND POWERLESSNESS OF SPIRIT

§10. The political and social presuppositions.

- a. Hobbes as ideologue of absolute monarchy as *enlightened* monarchy, cf. Voltaire (cf. *De cive* praef., toward the end).
- b. Battle of the citizenly spirit against the feudal one (*Leviathan*, p. 67 [Tuck ed., chap. 10], *Elements* 1.17.5 and, 1.19.2; Marx, Lukács,* Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1920), vol. 1).*
- c. Inadequacy of this statement: it is a matter not of what gave historical effectiveness to the Hobbesian ideal but of *what* this ideal consists in and whether it is the true ideal. Besides (against Marxism): the Hobbesian ideal is the ideal of Marxism.
- d. City culture (cf. Sorbière)*—Freedom—The possibility of a tradition-free thinking—Thucydides on Athens. *Enlightenment as the reacquisition of ancient freedom.*

§11. The Enlightenment.

- a. The limits of reason: the necessity of power (φιλοσοφία and δύναμις πολιτική).
- b. But in Plato there is no enlightenment except for the ruler-philosophers themselves; this possibility disappears in the democrat and antitheoretician Hobbes—thus *universal* enlightenment. A final state without force? No! By enlightenment *alone* no peace possible: it *always* needs force.
- c. On the other hand: once mutual fear has been replaced *automatically* by fear of authority, as before Socrates, one does not need

* Georg Lukács (1885–1971) was a Hungarian Marxist philosopher—TRANS.

* This parenthetical statement was deleted by Strauss—EDS.

* Samuel de Sorbière (1615–70) was a French physician and man of letters—TRANS. This parenthesis was deleted by Strauss—EDS.

philosophy (cf. Spinoza's renunciation of the leadership of the state by philosophers and Sorbière). Enlightenment thus has only *the* meaning of *removing* what restrains the *natural mechanism*: that is, the false opinions of the tradition, the prejudices.

- d. But where do prejudices come from? Of course from the passions (ambition of priests). Following the Reformation: *reestablishment* of the pure teaching. The *pagan* character of traditional politics. Hobbes's political science not only untraditional and antitraditional *as a matter of fact*—rather, it is *essential* to it that it is preceded by a scientific tradition. In fact [*geradezu*], political science is necessary for him only *because* there is a tradition: political science is necessary because peace and concord have been damaged by false *doctrinal* opinions (*De cive*, praef.; *Historia Ecclesiastica: Dialogus*). *Prejudices not natural but historical*: → “historical consciousness.” (In a *later* place: “natural” = the original intention of philosophy.)* *Negative* function of theory: only *apologetic* (critique of theology on the basis of Scripture).
- e. Thus it is presupposed: nature *in itself* functions well; it does not need in itself any improvement (*Natura errare non potest* [nature cannot err], *De homine*, in *Opera Philosophica quae latine scripsit omnia*, 1.49f.;* on the *purposiveness* of nature). Cf. Spinoza and Voltaire on the impossibility of miracles on account of the perfection of nature. Compare Pope—men bring everything into disorder—in nature everything is in order. *Not traditional*.

§12. The exposedness [*Preisgegebenheit*] of man.

- a. The inadequacy of this point of view; it does *not* hold for physics which, in contrast to politics, provides *positive* goods. The spiritual nature. Achievement, culture, and method. But the same concept of “nature” is authoritative for politics (*status naturalis-civilis*).
- b. (α) Why the attention to vanity (not “conscience”; proof: man may do everything out of fear) (at most, *pragmatic* conscience); (β) Why not founding of the state on vanity (cf. §5). The *dangerousness* of man; (γ) Why claim as a starting point; (δ) Killability, frailty [*Hinfalligkeit*] because of the evil of man's nature; ultimately because of

* This sentence was deleted by Strauss—EDS.

* This reference, also quoted by Dilthey in the volume cited above (455), seems to be drawn from an earlier edition of *De homine*; in Molesworth's edition of Hobbes's Latin works, the reference is to be found in vol. 3, p. 27—TRANS.

the fragility [*Gebrechlichkeit*] of the human body. *Exposedness of man.*

- c. Exposedness as the presupposition of (radical) Enlightenment, cf. Descartes *Meditationes* 1: prejudice doubt critique (*Deus malignus or concatenatio*). Critique of ancient rationalism ($\psi\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\epsilon\iota\nu$ και $\epsilon\pi\alpha\iota\tau\epsilon\iota\nu$ [blame and praise]) = Descartes's universal doubt. The enlightenment as *awakening*; compare also being startled, in the cold air of the state of nature, out of pseudosociality.

§13. Nature and spirit.

- a. Exposedness: Nature \neq spirit $\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}$ το φαίνεσθαι [the self-appearing]. Man has his own nature, *against* which he works: civilization as the culture of nature. *Spiritual* self-achievement. Method. Ethos of accomplishment as *one's own* accomplishment: "work." Spirit exists only through self-achievement—its power and its powerlessness. Culture and method.
(The separation of right and power in the foundation of natural right shows that man is presupposed as *free*.) The endless striving (compare Leibniz); the critique of *beatitudo* [bliss].
- b. Anthropology is conditioned by *this* opposition. Philosophy of spirit or consciousness necessarily fails to recognize the exposedness; it claims one way or another $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$ ισχυρότερα σώματος [soul is stronger than body] (instances in Fichte, Hegel, and Cohen). Scheler's defense against Cassirer's polemic.*
- c. Philosophy of spirit *regards* the spirit; the *self-enjoyment* of the spirit (*sibi complacere*); fundamental understanding of vanity: it is *fallen* spirit, that is, spirit *regarded* as *nature*.
Cf. Heidegger, p. 229.*
(Vanity as spirit: its priority over sensibility.) In vanity, the spirit tends to *come to rest* in self-enjoyment, to be at rest.

§14. The genesis of naturalism.

* Hermann Cohen (1842–1918) was a founder of Marburg's Neo-Kantian school; Strauss commented on Cohen earlier in his own career, as well as toward its end. Ernst Cassirer (1874–1945), a neo-Kantian who developed his own "philosophy of symbolic forms," wrote a piece, available in English as "'Spirit' and 'Life' in Contemporary Philosophy" (*The Philosophy of Ernst Cassirer*, ed. P. Schilpp [Evanston, IL: Library of Living Philosophers, 1949]), in which he critiques Max Scheler (1874–1928). Strauss discussed Scheler in classes at the New School. His main work is *Formalism and Ethics and Nonformal Ethics of Values*, trans. M. Frings and R. Funk (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973)—TRANS.

* *Being and Time*, trans. Stambaugh, 210–11—TRANS.

- a. The Spirit can only be spirit, that is, achieve itself, if it recognizes its own *powerlessness*; it must be summoned to its own *seriousness*; it must be *humbled*.
(Cf. Voltaire on "soul"; Nietzsche; Freud on Copernicus, Darwin, psychoanalysis; [Anatole] France, *Garden of Epicurus*).
One comes in this way to the *primacy* of nature.
- b. The spirit should not be in such a way as to be able to be *pleased with itself*: depreciation of spirit, cynicism; emphasis on what is below → aesthetic admiration of the passions.
The *duty* of reducing man to a fact [*Faktum*].
Man is so far from being a fact that he can reduce himself to a fact only if he regards this reduction as his *duty*.
- c. The depreciation of everything higher as "vain" and the attachment to civilization.
Attachment by way of exposedness analogous to attachment by way of death. In the same way that spirit gets its *content*, the individual gets the content of his morality, his real relation *with* the other, on the basis of the fact of his exposedness *to* the other.
Hobbes's philosophy defined by the same ethos it represents and promotes.
- d. Exposedness and thrownness: Hobbes's philosophy remains *in the face of* death, it is the philosophy of averageness.

IV. CHAPTER: THE FIRST ATHEISM AND THE SECULARIZATION OF BELIEF

§15. The critique of religion.

- a. Critique of revelation.
- b. Analysis of religion.
- c. Denial of immortality and providence.
- d. God only power (compare §12bγ).
- e. The idea of anthropology and atheism.

§16. The Christian provenance of the critique of vanity (Calvin on *gula-superbia* [gluttony-pride]; the state and death replace God. . . . Nothing is explained by that: cf. Heidegger's interpretation of conscience. *De cive* 6.13: *imperium, quo maius transferri non potest* . . . ["imperium, quo majus ab hominibus conferri non potest": sovereignty greater than which cannot be conferred by men].

§17. *Ressentiment*: Plato's Nomoi [*Laws*] shows that *exertion* in no way follows from the denial of providence.

Thus: *negation* of providence, with the *expectation* of divine help, [has as a] condition: a *disappointed* expectation.

Nietzsche's eternal return.

To what extent this critique also applies to Heidegger.

Make connection with §3.

V. CHAPTER: TESTING AND DEEPENING
OF OUR INTERPRETATION THROUGH THE
HOBBS-CRITIQUE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

LETTER FROM STRAUSS TO HANS-GEORG GADAMER
AND GERHARD KRÜGER (1935)



38 Perne Road, Cambridge
May 12, 1935

Dear Mr. Gadamer! Dear Mr. Krüger!

I am so pressed for time that I have to take the liberty of writing this letter to both of you instead of addressing two letters of roughly the same tenor to each of you.

I have to bother you with a very great request. I have by now finished my first work on Hobbes and am currently in search of a publisher. I will be able to find an English publisher only if the book is published in Germany, since they do not like translating from the MS here. Not to mention the fact that I seriously doubt whether the work can be translated! As my situation stands, everything depends on my publishing a work on Hobbes very soon. I am therefore coming to both of you with the request that you be so kind as to help me (directly or by means of your friends) get the writing placed somewhere in a German-speaking country. I would not come to you with the request if I didn't believe that the writing is worthy of publication. Since most authors say the same thing about their writings, I can venture to make this judgment only with the understanding that you have a certain trust in my self-criticism. In this sense I say that I think the work in question is better than my earlier things.

The work is not identical with the one whose first chapter I showed you some years ago. Induced by the study of Hobbes's papers as well as by the historical conditions of Hobbes's emergence, I resolved, first and foremost, to write a kind of developmental history of Hobbes's political science (which, according to his use of language, comprises morality). I entitled the writing "Hobbes's Political Science in Its Genesis." (To anticipate—it is not long, at most ten press sheets [160 octavo pages].) It is divided into eight sections. In the very brief introduction I first establish the claim that the significance of Hobbes's politics is generally underestimated, and then I show that this underestimation stems from the overestimation of the significance of mathematics and natural science for this politics, that is to say, from an underestimation of the originality of Hobbes's morality, to which Dilthey's "dependence" demonstrations have contributed in particular; in order to assess Hobbes's significance, it is essential to figure out what is for him the decisive *outlook* [*Gesinnung*] and to *confront* that with the ancient and the biblical respectively. The elucidation of this outlook is the task of the second section ("The Moral Basis"), in which I show that the leading outlook in Hobbes is characterized by the fundamental antithesis of vanity and fear of violent death, and that the inner connection between the two sides of this antithesis brings out, ever more emphatically, that this antithesis is intended morally, and that, as well as why, Hobbes shies away from its moral understanding. The section concludes with the observation that the connection under discussion is at any rate essentially "earlier" than the mathematical-natural-scientific politics as well as with the question of whether it also wasn't earlier biographically (Hobbes was forty years old when he came to know Euclid); in the latter case—which really is the case, as will be shown in what follows—the crucial question arises as to whether and in what respect Hobbes's politics was not only endangered but even, on the other hand, promoted by mathematics and natural science. And in this way the motivation for the study of Hobbes's politics in light of its development is provided. Section 3: "Aristotelianism." Hobbes's first period, prior to the acquaintance [*Kenntnis*] with mathematics and natural science, is correctly characterized as "humanist" (by Dilthey). I show that the philosophic authority for Hobbes during this time was Aristotle, and more precisely, the Aristotelian "Politics," that is, the *Ethics*, *Politics* and, above all, the *Rhetoric*; I then trace the influence that Aristotle exercised on the politics of the mature Hobbes, thereby making certain, through a confrontation among the texts, that the central chapters of the Hobbesian anthropology are nothing but free adaptations of the respective parts of the *Rhetoric*. (You, Mr. Gadamer, will perhaps find it interesting in this connection that Hobbes published two English excerpts from the *Rhetoric*—they

are reprinted in the large edition; that a Latin excerpt is to be found in his papers; that he explicitly left out the *Rhetoric* from his damning judgment on Aristotelian philosophy; and that—no one has drawn any kind of implications from this.) Section 4: “Aristocratic Virtue.” The Aristotelianism of Hobbes’s youth is to be identified with the modification it underwent in the sixteenth century in Italy at the hands of Castiglione, Niphus, Fr. Piccolomini, and others (an excerpt from the *Nicomachean Ethics* based on Piccolomini can be found in Hobbes’s papers).^{*} It is a characteristic of this modification that *heroica virtus* [heroic virtue] acquires a central significance. This has to do with the fact that heroic virtue is meant to replace Christian *sanctitas* [sanctity]; for my purpose, what is decisive is the identification of *heroica virtus* with the virtue of the courtier, of the noble. From this point on, Hobbes’s analyses of “Honour” are to be recognized as analyses of aristocratic virtue—the analyses of Honour thus have two sources: (1) the analysis of the *καλὰ* in the *Rhetoric*; (2) the aristocratic literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. I then show that aristocratic virtue recedes further and further from Hobbes’s teaching as it progresses, although curiously, in *Leviathan*, under the influence of Descartes, it steps for a moment into the center (for this part your analyses of Descartes, Mr. Krüger, were very useful to me). The section concludes with a reference to the significance that Hobbes’s moral clarification of self-consciousness has for Hegel (as it was generally my concern to emphasize the deep connection between Hobbes and Hegel). Section 5: “The State and Religion.” A continuation of Tönnies’s research on historical development. Section 6: “History.” While the elements of Hobbes’s teaching previously treated are more or less traditional, the significance that history has for Hobbes—in his youth overtly and explicitly, later on covertly—is in principle revolutionary. In the sixteenth century a fundamental turn of political science to history had been carried out (Bodin, Patrizzi, and finally and above all Bacon), which I interpret by way of a confrontation with the traditional stance on history: history becomes central philosophically because norms no longer require discussion—the ancients had settled that, as Bacon says—and the entire interest shifts to *application*. (This genesis of the philosophic interest in history is still clearly evident in Hegel’s philosophy of history.) Man does *not obey* precepts, and so he requires the study of history in order to cultivate the technique of realizing the norms; this technique is meant to replace obedience (therefore also the new

^{*} Baldassare Castiglione (1478–1529) was an Italian diplomat and author of *The Courtier*. Agostino Nifo (1473–1538) was an Italian philosopher and an Averroist interpreter of Aristotle. Alessandro Piccolomini (1508–79) was an Italian humanist philosopher.—TRANS.

interest in the passions and so on). Now this turn to history is "sublated" [*aufgehoben*] in Hobbes's later "unhistorical," "antihistorical," "rationalistic" politics: its explicit opposition to traditional politics consists in its guaranteeing unconditional applicability, in other words, in its satisfying the desired goal, which, on the presupposition of traditional politics, was delegated to history: for this reason and only this reason is Hobbes's politics "unhistorical." The purpose of this section is to reveal the essentially historical character of modern politics using the example of the teaching of its founder and to demonstrate the decay of ancient cosmology (and Christian theology) as its presupposition. [Section] 7. "The New Morality." I first show that the fundamentally moral view presented in section 2 is also biographically earlier than the turn to mathematics and natural science. I then show that this fundamental view is identical with the specifically bourgeois (here I have Hegel as an authority). Afterward I indicate that the presupposition of this morality is the same decay of cosmology and theology that I had brought up in the previous section as the presupposition of the historicization of philosophy. Section 8: "The New Political Science." The purpose of this final (and longest) chapter is to answer the question what the Euclidian method means for Hobbes's politics. I first indicate that within certain limits, Hobbes's outlook [*Gesinnung*] in the analysis of the passions and so on is meant to be presented in the style of the *Rhetoric*; this creates the opportunity for a confrontation between Hobbes's anthropology and that of the *Rhetoric* (in section 3 I had pointed out only the relationship of dependency), as a result of which the conclusion of section 2, I believe, receives decisive confirmation. I then inquire into the significance of "Euclid" for Hobbes's politics, that is, into the meaning of an "exact" politics. This leads to a fundamental confrontation between Hobbesian and Platonic politics: Plato is concerned with "exactness" out of an interest in the absolute purity of the standard, Hobbes by contrast out of an interest in absolute applicability. In concluding, I show, formally following the ἐνδοξα [accepted opinions] concerning the relationship between ancient and modern politics, the condition that makes the specifically modern problem of sovereignty possible; this is the belief in the impotence of reason, the necessary consequence of the decay of cosmology and theology, or in other words the emancipation of the passions. (For this purpose, besides Hobbes himself, Rousseau provides me with the decisive evidence.) A comment on the significance of modern science for Hobbes's politics, which is meant to lead to a further study of Hobbes's critique of religion, forms the conclusion.

I would like to add that the work does not suffer from the same formal deficiencies of my Spinoza book, which you, Mr. Krüger, then so justifiably

criticized, and which I tried to fix to some extent only five years later in the introduction to my writing on Maimonides. In particular, I ask you to believe me that the work is better and more clearly written than this letter, which I, much to my regret, had to write directly on the typewriter.

Klein,* who is now back in Berlin, has a copy of the first seven sections. He is already making an effort regarding a publisher. If you would combine your efforts with his, perhaps success would not be ruled out.

I have yet another particular request of you, Mr. Gadamer. I have heard of your writing on Plato and the poets.* I have not been able to obtain it. Would you be willing to make it available to me, possibly as a loan, or by sending me the corrected proofs [?] You would thereby oblige me immensely.

In asking for your indulgence for bothering you with such a great request, I remain, with warmest regards to you both,

Yours,
Leo Strauss.

* Jacob Klein (1899–1978), dean and tutor at St. John's College in Annapolis, was a scholar of classical thought and a longtime friend of Strauss. See notes 11–16, 18–21, 24–25, 44. Meier's introduction above—TRANS.

* *Plato und die Dichter* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1934), available in English as "Plato and the Poets," in *Dialogue and Dialectic: Eight Hermeneutical Studies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), 39ff—TRANS.

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